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THE LIFE OF
LLEWELYN POWYS



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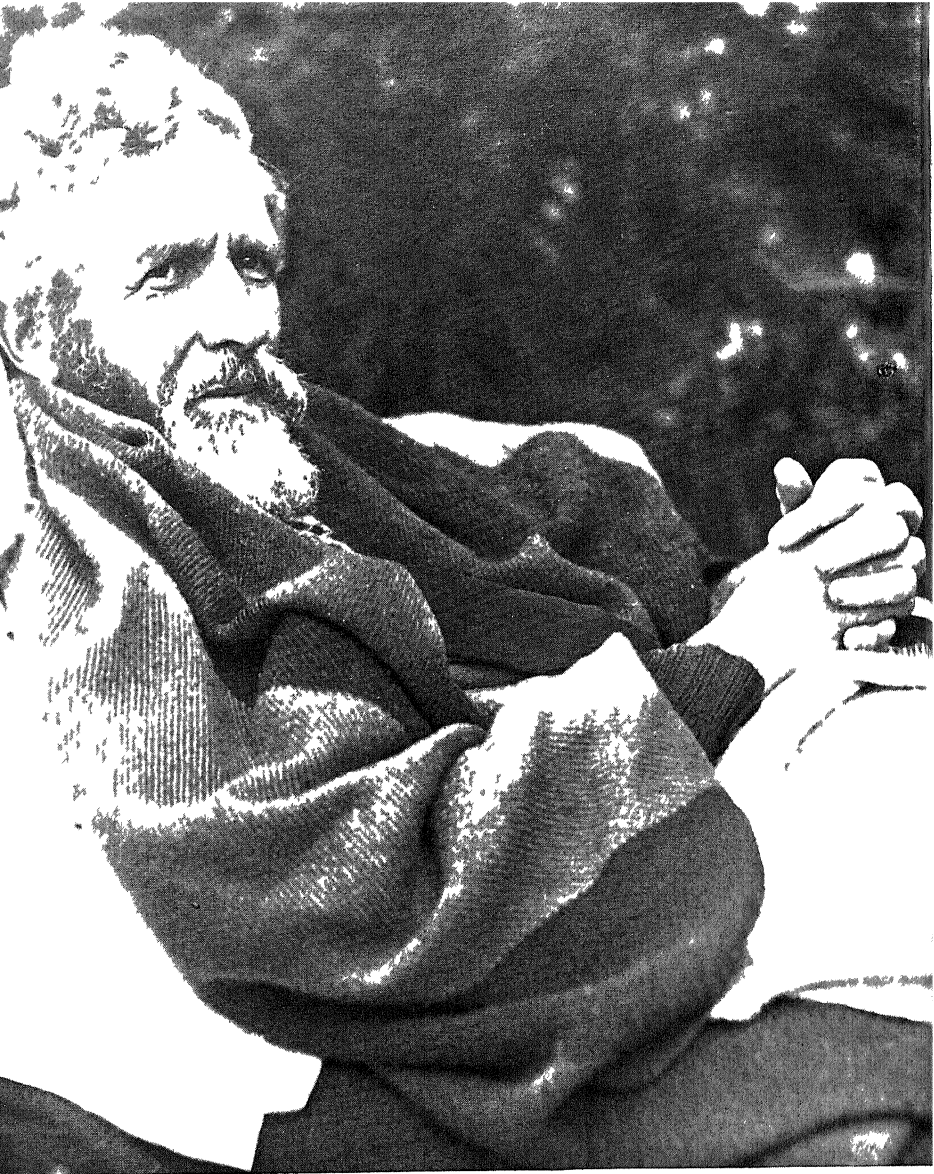
OLD GODS FALLING

DE QUINCEY (Great Lives)

VICTORIAN WALLFLOWERS

THACKERAY: a personality

CHARLES READE: a biography



Llewelyn Powys in 1934

THE LIFE
OF
LLEWELYN POWYS

Malcolm Elwin



London
John Lane The Bodley Head

First published 1946

To
EVE

Printed in Great Britain by
UNWIN BROTHERS LIMITED, LONDON AND WOKING
for JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LIMITED
8 Bury Place London WC1

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Origins

IN wrath against social conventions which frustrated fulfilment of this youth, Llewelyn Powys wrote in *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*: 'it was my misfortune to belong to, to have been born into, the English middle class.' But his father, the Rev. Charles Francis Powys, had patrician origin. A branch of the ancient Welsh family of Powys became landed proprietors in Shropshire during the fifteenth century, whence descended Sir Thomas Powys, a judge in the time of Queen Anne, who acquired the manor of Lilford in 1711. His grandson, who inherited the family estates in Shropshire as well as Lilford, left two sons. The elder became the first Lord Lilford in 1797; the younger, a Northamptonshire parson, begot the grandfather of the remarkable family that has so enriched literature and art in our time.

In *Swiss Essays* Llewelyn tells how his grandfather, the Rev. Littleton Charles Powys, married in middle life a daughter of John Lewis Moilliet, a Swiss who came from Geneva about 1770 to enter a banking business at Birmingham. Amelia Moilliet was a widow with one child, Philippa Knight, who, by her marriage with Canon Shirley, Regius Professor of ecclesiastical history at Oxford, became the mother of the eleventh Earl Ferrers, of Alice Linton, and of Ralph Shirley. At Stalbridge Rectory in Dorset she had two sons by her second marriage. The elder, who entered the army and died of cholera at Kandahar, was called Littleton, a name traditional in the family since a seventeenth-century Powys had married a descendant of the celebrated jurist whose treatise on tenures provided the basis of *Coke upon Littleton*. The younger was the Rev. Charles Francis Powys, who was vicar of Shirley in Derbyshire, ancient seat of the Shirley family, when he married Mary Cowper Johnson.

The Powys ancestry supplies little to suggest the genius so lavishly bestowed upon the offspring of C. F. Powys. Apart from two or three distinguished lawyers, the Powyses were mainly content with their duties as landed proprietors. To their posterity they bequeathed a love of the soil, loyalty to principle and affection, profound personal pride capable of unworldliness amounting to quixotry, and tenacity and strength of will enabling assertion of personality. On this oaken

trunk successive marriages grafted a more sensitive growth. Amelia Moilliet was a lively, talented lady, who painted well in water colours, enjoyed good company and conversation, and kept an excellent table; to her may be traced the artistic tastes, the social and conversational talents, of the Rev. C. F. Powys's children. But their poetical and imaginative qualities derived from their mother's blood, which had flowed in the veins of two great English poets, John Donne and William Cowper.

The sons of John Donne are said to have left no male descendants, but if only a collateral branch, the Donnes of Norfolk sprang from the same stock as the seventeenth-century satirist and metaphysical poet who surrendered a life of levity and licence to religion and became the most witty and eloquent of illustrious divines. The poet Cowper believed himself a direct descendant of John Donne. 'I deal much in poetry, as did our venerable ancestor, the Dean of St. Paul's,' he wrote to a cousin: 'there is in me, I believe, more of the Donne than of the Cowper.' William Cowper's mother was a Donne, and her brother's daughter was the mother of Dr. John Johnson, known to readers of Cowper's *Letters* as his cousin 'Johnny of Norfolk,' who was Mary Cowper Johnson's grandfather. The morbid fear of life which afflicted Cowper to madness, presumably derived from the Donnes, was transmitted in different degrees to Mary Cowper Powys and some of her children, in whom the reaction of this strain's mingling with the stronger Powys stock produced three individual examples of literary genius. John Cowper Powys received from his father's blood 'the innate and almost savage realism,' contrasting with those 'natural impulses towards romance and mysticism,' inherited from his mother, which, as he tells in his *Autobiography*, inspired 'the imaginative, poetical cult, whereby I have romanticized and idealized my life.' Of all his mother's sons Theodore Francis Powys most obviously inherited preoccupation with fear of life and death, but the Powys tenacity and strength enabled him to retreat from the world into rural solitude, there to combat his obsession with reflection and ironic humour. Physical sickness early confronted Llewelyn Powys with fear of death, but instead of impelling refuge in religious consolation or such resentful resignation as Barbellion's, the menace stimulated his Powys blood to fight for self-preservation and so 'sharpened his wits' that he acquired an intellectual lucidity which demanded and developed a system of philosophy defying his ever-present fear.

'Johnny of Norfolk' married a Miss Livius, whose ancestors migrated from Germany in the seventeenth century and intermarried with Irish stock, whence perhaps derived the characteristics of liveliness, loveliness, and hasty temper, associated with their name by the Donne family historian, Mrs. Catherine Bodham Johnson. Their son, the Rev. William Cowper Johnson, was born in 1813, educated at Sherborne and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and became in 1840 incumbent ('how that odd Latin word "incumbent" will always be associated with long evangelical Sunday services!' wrote Llewelyn) of Yaxham Rectory near Norwich, where he was a neighbour of his cousin, William Bodham Donne, and through him acquainted with Edward FitzGerald—'the last of the Epicureans,' as Llewelyn called him in recording a pilgrimage to his Suffolk grave. He married Marianne Patteson, whose brother John, as curate to the Rev. Littleton Charles Powys at Stalbridge, stood godfather to C. F. Powys. At Yaxham at one time Mr. Johnson took pupils, and among them, as a candidate for his old college, Corpus, came C. F. Powys, who thus met his tutor's third surviving daughter Mary. They were married at Yaxham on October 4, 1871, when Mr. Powys was twenty-eight and his wife twenty-two.

'That strange woman who ever loved sorrow rather than joy,' wrote Llewelyn of his mother in *Skin for Skin*, 'who ever preferred the shady side of the road, and would rather carry in her hand a white foxglove than a coloured foxglove.' 'How beautiful she could look sometimes, her face for a moment illuminated, that face which in its delicacy and refinement spoke of the inward life that her romantic spirit had been compelled to lead, as the wife of a man with the pride of a lion and the low forehead of a lion, and as the mother of eleven wilful and godless children.' A commonplace book preserved among the family papers indicates the self-dedication demanded of her by marriage. The first pages were filled before marriage with notes while attending an art class and quotations from books; then, after a few blank pages, come laundry lists, memoranda connected with her husband's clerical duties, and at the end some childish scribbles. She accepted a philosophy of resignation especially irritating to her son Llewelyn; as if recognizing that her husband, a man of strong passions, necessarily repressed his natural instincts to become his calling, she resigned herself to similar self-denial as partner and mistress of his household. His study was a sanctum to which no sound was allowed to penetrate when he was

composing his sermons, to which she went for consultation on subjects of indecision. She controlled her household and her children, her husband intervening only at important epochs, such as the boys' entering school or college or starting their careers. Gentle, tranquil, patient, she accommodated her life to circumstances and succeeded by self-discipline in moulding her family according to her desire. In simple faith that 'God is love,' she so successfully taught her family to live in love together that, as her son Littleton has written, 'though in tastes and interests no two members of the family were alike, in affection for each other they were bound together by bonds which nothing in this world could ever loosen.'

To no man could the complexities of John Cowper Powys's eccentric genius appear more bewildering than to his own father, but, inheriting from his mother his sensitive poetic imagination, John allowed his more flexible, fluid, and feminine nature to flow about his father's essential masculinity like waves about a craggy promontory. With a deep admiration and reverence for his father, so far from resenting as subservience this subordination of his personality, he revelled in his deference like a woman in a Brontë novel. In his *Autobiography*, the impulse to 'glory in the feminine aspects of my character' he significantly calls 'Cowperism.'

Such 'Cowperism' inspired his mother's attitude to her husband. The subordination of her personality, which the masculine Llewelyn impatiently regarded as abasement, was demanded by her devotion. She never permitted a hint to her husband that his simple primæval nature was incapable of sympathy with her inward self, and the tenderness of her selfless love received its tribute, as Llewelyn relates in *Love and Death*, in the first weeks after she died. While resting on the gravel walk which his father was weeding, kneeling with his back turned, Llewelyn heard a sound reminiscent of a terrier's whimpering when it came home with a gin on its foot.

'Father! Father!' I called, leaping up and running to his side, overwhelmed by a flood of love such as I had scarcely ever felt for him before. Large tears were falling upon the patch of ground where he was working. Indeed, the roughed-up gravel-mould was wet with tears that had been steadily falling from the grey eyes of this proud old man of countless inarticulate reserves whom not one of us had ever known to cry. 'What is it? What is it? Father?' My heart yearned with sympathy. His words came at last. 'There is nobody now to come and see what I do!'

'This proud old man of countless inarticulate reserves,' wrote Llewelyn, and John Cowper, in a memorable portrait of his father,

declared that his 'volcanic pride, sustained by an inaccessible reticence, communicated to his offspring from their earliest years an abysmal contempt for worldly frivolity as compared with a certain grave, majestic, simple passion for natural history.' To the complex John he seemed in his simplicity 'more childlike than any of his eleven children,' deriving 'more thrilling pleasure—a deep, massive, volcanic pleasure—from little natural things than anyone I have ever known.' Sunshine, as Llewelyn remarked, 'seemed to affect his whole being;' as he strode up and down the gravel terrace of his vicarage, rubbing his hands and exclaiming exultantly at a fine spring morning, he would murmur aloud, 'We have much to be thankful for.' Compelled by his calling to curb his instincts, so that he even abjured the pleasures of the table, appeasing a healthy appetite with bread and butter as his staple diet and tasting alcohol only as a priest at the altar, he vented his natural animal lust in ardent enjoyment of his daily routine, so that 'the simple fact of being able to walk at all, with long steady strides,' generated a glow of exultation. 'His interest in Nature'—inherited by all his children, but especially by John and Llewelyn—'was part of his passionate—but totally subjective—romance of life.' Every scene he ever visited remained in his memory associated with pleasurable emotions there experienced. Each wild bird's egg in his cherished collection recalled some memorable climb or carefree holiday in the woods. When, with faculties dimmed in old age at Weymouth, he one day wandered off, it was, as Llewelyn tells in that beautiful essay, 'Out of the Past,' to his boyhood home at Stalbridge, most beloved corner of his beloved Dorset, that he made his way, knowing by instinct every field and stile. From his father Llewelyn inherited the same fervent love of Dorset of which his gift of words enabled expression in so many essays of his later years.

At Shirley five children, John, Littleton, Theodore, Gertrude, and Nelly, were born to the young vicar, who every summer took his growing family for their seaside holiday to visit his mother at Weymouth. In 1879 the death of his elder brother in Afghanistan left him heir to a fortune of some forty thousand pounds, and feeling that duty required residence near his aged mother to comfort her loneliness, he accepted a curacy at St. Peter's, Dorchester. Thus exchanging a comfortable country living, where his authority and social prestige were unshared even by a squire, for busy subordinate activities in a populous urban parish, the move was characteristic of

his contempt for worldly advancement. With his love of Dorset, it was also a happy redemption from exile.

From a mayor of Hardy's Casterbridge he rented Rothesay House, 'an enormously large dwelling in an extensive garden, quite heedless of the fact that the house was still being built and the garden still being dug.' Here, while John and Littleton went for lessons to a Miss Osborne and later to Sherborne Preparatory School, three more children were born—Bertie in 1881, Marian in 1882, and Llewelyn in 1884—before Mr. Phelps of Montacute House offered him the living of Montacute in Somerset.

The move to Montacute Vicarage was made shortly before Christmas of 1885, when Llewelyn was sixteen months old. For nearly twenty-nine years it was home for him and his mother; his father and his sister Gertrude lived there about four years longer. There the three youngest children were born—Catherine Edith Philippa (known to the world of letters as Philippa Powys, to her family as 'Katie') in 1886, William Ernest ('Willie') in 1888, and Lucy Amelia in 1890.

Montacute Boyhood

FIFTH of six sons and eighth child of eleven, Llewelyn Powys was born at Rothesay House, Dorchester, on August 13, 1884. His elder brothers—John Cowper, Littleton Charles, Theodore Francis, and Albert Reginald—had exhausted the names traditional in the family, and deciding to choose a name reminiscent of his remote Welsh ancestry, his father recalled a reading tour in North Wales with a Cambridge friend named Llewelyn. Mr. Llewelyn was therefore invited to be one of the godfathers at the christening in St. Peter's Church; the other was Mr. Henry Moule, for many years curator of the Dorchester Museum, and Mrs. Moule was godmother.

The fact that he was born in the month of August—'born in a corn-field,' as his brother John remarked—always afforded satisfaction to his pagan spirit.

Down in the West of England those four weeks have a character of their own. They know nothing of the mystical intimations which belong to the spring, and yet, at the same time, they are void of the sombre tints of cold annihilation that one comes to associate with the fall of the year. This month of Caesar Augustus is a hot, good-natured, casual month, During its thirty-one days the foison of many a broad acre grows ready for the harvest; indeed, the countryside, far and near, lies basking under its hedges, like some swart, amorous dairy-wench, in sultry contentment, her vagrant longings at last completely satisfied. In the month of August the power of the Priest is at its nadir. Let him raise pale, vestmented hands before never so many ornate altars, let him thunder in the garb of an evil crow from never so many Puritan pulpits, it will profit him little. Behold! the grain grows golden in its husk, the green apples swell on their whorled twigs, and the shell of each hazelnut is neatly fitted with its ivory kernel. What have we to fear?

So wrote the apostle of happiness in *Skin for Skin*, and from infancy he lived as if anticipating his future doctrine. He was 'the most sunny, happy, winning small boy it was ever my lot to see,' says his brother Littleton, who saw some thousands of boys during his career as a preparatory schoolmaster. At four years old, as he stood to be measured for his velvet suit by Ellen Greenham (great-granddaughter of Shoel, the village poet whose memory is preserved in *Somerset Essays*), he was 'so excited at being alive' that his mother had to be called to stop his jumping up and down and repeating,

'Happy me! Happy me!' His brother John heard the same ecstatic cry from him as one bright day he danced up the garden path, between lawns and flower beds which seemed to him 'always held under a spell of golden grace.'

His earliest recollection was of tears—tears of vexation at not being allowed to attend the local celebrations of Queen Victoria's first jubilee, held in the broad meadow beneath Miles Hill, whence, as the mowing grass grew high, he would hear corncrakes calling through the summer evening as he lay awake in the night-nursery. With tears too he greeted his governess, Miss Beales, who after fifty years remembered how she kissed his 'fat knees' at their first meeting. Always excited to eager interest by events around him, he could not wait for a formal introduction; escaping from Gertrude and Bertie, with whom he was 'doing sums,' he ran slate in hand to the drawing-room, where Nellie was having a piano lesson, burst through the spring door, and fell. Picked up weeping by the governess and his sister, who searched vainly for injuries, he decided that his knees looked flushed and deserved sympathy. Nellie returned to the piano, calling him 'cry baby,' but seeing the little boy's ready response to Miss Beales's treatment, his father, who had looked in on hearing the noise, went to his study rubbing his hands and remarking with satisfaction, 'She'll do.'

He inherited his father's zest in being alive; the gusto of his enjoyment left indelible memories to be vividly recollected by the white-haired essayist on his bed of sickness. Gertrude and Bertie laughed at him when one autumn evening, working by lamplight at his cross-stitch, he broke the schoolroom silence to exclaim, 'I do love you, Miss Beales.' Warmly he expanded to everything and everybody, but it was simply 'a sudden overwhelming sense of well-being that prompted the thoughtless utterance, for then the sense of existence would suddenly fill me with exultation so that I could have lifted up my head and crowed like a cock a dozen times in the day.'

All life was then a pleasure. It was a pleasure to have the lessons interrupted by my mother coming in to look after her tame white dove strutting over the sandy floor of its roomy cage with its pink feet. It was a pleasure to learn the poem Wordsworth wrote to a kitten playing with leaves, or the poem by William Allingham that begins 'Up the airy mountains,' and then later, in the schoolroom-walk for Katie and me to be shown by Miss Beales polychrome Columkill lights in the froth bubbles at the edge of the pool below the heavily revolving water-wheel of the Montacute Mill.



Llewelyn Powys aged four

In the same mood a few years later he stole out into the still beauty of a frosty night, leaving young Willie at work on his rabbit nets and Bertie studiously bent over his drawing-board, to wander over fields 'stiff with hoar frost, each leaf of grass glittering more miraculously than the stars above.' Intoxicated by the beauty of the night, he found himself standing beneath a solitary Scotch fir—'scarcely aware of what I was doing I had thrown my arms about its red rough tangible girth and with my young eyes fixed upon the moon had striven to awake myself for ever out of the "dull soul swoon" of common day, awake myself to an alert and lively apprehension of the accident of finding myself a free and cognisant being upon so conjured a planet.'

Such sudden solitary excursions are recorded of Shelley as a boy, who would likewise escape from gay companionship with his sisters into an inner life of poetic imagination. Like Shelley Llewelyn was saved by his happiness in gay companionship from the morbid imaginings of the lonely Coleridge. 'The shock of realizing for the first time the ugly fact of death' occurred when his mother, before bidding him good-night, sang his favourite hymn at his bedside.

While she was singing I heard the sparrows chirping and rustling in the jasmine as they settled themselves to roost, and this familiar sound, together with the resonant echo of a horse's trot along the Stoke road, for some reason roused my infant's consciousness to a range beyond the ordinary, and in a single desolate moment my child's mind clearly comprehended the inevitability of one day being separated from my mother.

Concealing his distress he clung tightly to her hand and said his childish prayers with greater fervour. Thereafter he had occasional moods of abstract reflection at moments of enjoyment or expectancy of delight—moods 'wherein I became suddenly aware of time as if it actually were static, as if the swift flaming of the immortal moments had been suddenly arrested in the cold hand of eternity, and I awake to know it.' He was 'still a very small boy' when, after a merry tennis party when his brothers and sisters were laughing and joking on the drive with parting guests, he excused himself from joining them on a pretext of taking in the garden chairs.

I could not abide their gaiety just then, for as the beetles hummed into the wire-netting near the variegated maple-tree, and the tennis lawn grew damper and damper, I was being initiated into an awareness of our earth existence that stirred me from crown to heel. I was still a child, but I had become suddenly possessed by the liveliest realization of birth and death and the dream nature of the hours that lay before me to spend as I liked.

Many imaginative children observed in such moods by undiscerning parents are said to be suffering from reaction after excitement; too often their zest in living is left behind with childhood, eliminated in adult life by the doctrines of duty and self-denial associated with seemingly sense of responsibility. Sometimes after a free day in the sun mature men thus withdraw from laughing throngs in cricket pavilions to wander alone over dew-damp grass, but their mood is tainted with regret for the charmed hours sacrificed in salaried drudgery. Llewelyn's lucid inquiring mind never forgot a lesson in living; it became his creed and his counsel to 'live every day fully as though it were your last,' and the unhappy periods of his life were when oppressive conditions thwarted self-fulfilment.

He suffered the fears inevitable to sensitive imagination. As a boy of eight or nine he would force himself on summer nights to walk round the loneliest part of the garden 'thinking by so doing to breed in myself a stouter heart.'

How often had I not gone faltering round that enclosure in the heavy darkness transforming all objects to objects of fright, and starting clean out of my skin at the audible rustle of leaf or at the movement of a harvest-mouse in the grass!

Self-discipline failed to subjugate temperament, and in Africa he was to endure tortures unsuspected by the average unimaginative settler; he was ever conscious of the hidden horrors of the jungle, of being watched by 'a thousand sharp eyes . . . peering through the rank verdure.' But he did succeed in acquiring a head for heights, by being 'daily pulled, pushed, lifted, scolded and coaxed by my sister Nelly, to the topmost attic twigs of the walnut tree in the Montacute glebe.'

His elder brothers and sisters inspired a spirit of emulation. Talking of home in their study at Sherborne, John and Littleton would recall how their little brother, having just learned to run, arrived at their side in the garden and said with pride, 'Watch I go!' He was 'a lovely sunny child,' writes Littleton, 'always smiling and laughing, with a wealth of bright golden curly hair.' Visitors at the vicarage were charmed by the child's radiance, and one ecclesiastical dignitary asked if he was the original of Millais' famous picture, 'Bubbles.' Without self-consciousness he early developed a natural grace of manner which, allied to a fine presence in manhood, impressed everyone with the force of his fascinating personality. Left to wait for a haircut at the Yeovil barber's, he gaily engaged in conversation with the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who was also waiting

his turn, and delighted by his chatter, made a point of inquiring his identity before leaving.

Even then afflicted by digestive disorders, his brother John was sent home ill from Sherborne, and though, unsuspecting of their future intimacy, he saw Llewelyn simply as a 'very small child, his life-loving heavy-lidded eyes only just beginning to take in the marvel of being conscious upon the earth,' he sowed the seeds of Llewelyn's fervent faith in his eldest brother's genius. There were happy hours when the little boy sat astride his brother's stomach as he lay in the sun on Ham Hill, listening to the endless imaginative stories for which John was celebrated at Sherborne. In *Love and Death* he recalls how one summer morning on a woodland walk with John and their Aunt Dora, he gambolled ahead and began beating off the heads of champions with the stick of his wooden hoop till John caught him in his arms and said, 'Llewelyn, you must never, never do that again, never in your whole life—for you must not forget that every tree, every leaf, every flower is alive *as we are alive* and it is only very stupid or very wicked people who can be indifferent to the destruction of their earth companions.' To John he appeared much as little Hartley Coleridge was seen by his father—

A little child, a limber elf
Singing, dancing to itself.

He would look in at the open drawing-room window, where John was reading, watching with 'intense puzzled earnestness, anxious apparently to learn the secret of such absorption.' On one such occasion he exclaimed, 'How can you sit writing all the morning and not come out into the garden to play?'

On John devolved the duty, in April 1893, of breaking to the younger children the news of their sister Nelly's death. He said she had been 'taken away by the angels,' but Llewelyn, still short of his ninth birthday, suspected that it was 'only the way he put it,' and that he really did not believe in angels. Already Llewelyn doubted the efficacy of prayer. His mother had taught him that if he had sufficient faith his prayers would 'move mountains,' but morning and evening for many weeks he had vainly prayed that his bedridden grandmother should be made strong and well enough to carry him pick-a-back across her room.

His sister's death left an indelible impression on his memory. He wrote of it in his first book *Confessions of Two Brothers*, and almost

his last, *Love and Death*; it was the subject of 'Threnody,' one of his earliest essays, in *Ebony and Ivory*. It was a beautiful early spring—'by the end of March even the hedges by the road-side were white with blackthorn'—on 'a spring evening full of the promise of summer, when, as we played at haymaking at the end of the tennis lawn, cutting the fresh long grass and setting it out in little heaps to dry, she complained of a hurt in her side.' Four days later she was dead. Llewelyn, 'a small child drifting in and out through the tall French windows,' wondered and pondered. If he did not yet suspect the fiction of a supreme deity, he began to doubt the benevolence of his father's God. What motive of divine wisdom could lurk behind this ruthless destruction of a budding life, guiltless of aught but love and laughter? If it was 'God's will,' it was cruel caprice, akin rather to the sadistic gloatings of a Caligula over his victims than to the canons of benevolence and wisdom.

But children are by instinct imitative; he did not yet question traditional convention. As 'he lay in the dining-room armchair and cried for long hours,' he recognized the awful inevitability of human mortality; it was like 'a hand stretched out from eternity and laid upon the happy and secure feeling of our life in time.' For a child time moves slowly and life's panorama with limitless possibilities spreads far beyond range of mental vision; this was a sharp reminder that the semblance of permanence was illusory. He thought of his father 'sitting in his armchair occupied with his netting through the long winter evenings while my mother read to him, one after the other, the *Waverley Novels*'—of Littleton 'looking over his camphor-smelling drawers of bright butterflies'—of John 'in summer weather with his long fingers stained with ink, writing at the same window'—and he realized that their days must pass. If life was liable to such treacherous hazard, it was evidently expedient to make the most of one's time.

To a child of his generation the illusion of permanence derived plausibility from an exceptionally long era of social security. Wars were fought by professional soldiers on distant frontiers, industrial disputes settled by peaceful arbitration, the cost of living fluctuated little; the grimmer aspects of inequality, apparent in cities, did not obtrude upon rural life. With its smooth inflexible routine—from bible-reading after breakfast, when the younger children clustered round their mother on the sofa, to family prayers at night, when the four servants, who never sought new places, filed in to share the

simple ritual—'it was difficult to believe that the firm family life of Montacute Vicarage was settled upon an uncertain reef of quicksand, in the midst of abrading time currents.' The illusion of security derived strength even from the numbers of the late Victorian family, for it was a self-contained society. The vicar's social standing admitted intimacy with few neighbours. There were Christmas and birthday parties at Montacute House with the Phelps girls, and occasional more distant visits, when the children delightedly piled into a hired carriage, to which Mr. Powys always referred 'a little contemptuously' as 'Chant's conveyance.' Occasionally cousins and school friends came to stay, but no extraneous influence ruffled the household's smooth routine, or impinged upon the personal relations among brothers and sisters and their parents.

Nelly's death left a gap in the sequence of ages, drawing a line of demarcation between the four elder children and their juniors. John and Littleton had passed from Sherborne to their father's old college at Cambridge; Theodore was learning farming; Gertrude early became her mother's lieutenant, and the prestige of seniority made her a mediating channel between the younger children and parental authority, her serenity and sweetness of temperament combining with natural dignity to create for herself a pivotal position from which she ever afterwards held together the conflicting personalities in the family. Bertie, eldest of the younger children, took as his close companions his immediate juniors, May and Llewelyn; the others were still in the nursery stage.

In manhood Bertie was said to resemble their father in appearance more than any of his brothers, and he inherited the Powys characteristics almost without alloy. In his nature were none of the subtler tendencies derived from their mother's blood. He was the antithesis of Theodore, ever tortured by doubt and speculation, masking his mistrust with irony; he was direct, downright, and practical. His perception was ponderous, always plodding in the wake of John's inspired fancy and Llewelyn's shrewd intuition, but having tenaciously grappled with a problem or assimilated an idea, he weighed it in the balance of an honest judgment and clung fast to his conclusion. 'Brother Positive' he was called in the family from his habit of stubborn assertion in argument.

In *Love and Death* Llewelyn recalls how, when he threw a living lobworm into a bonfire, Bertie scolded him, 'a serious-eyed little boy with a red scarf about his neck and dressed in an old garden

suit, delivering a true word to another little boy attentively listening beneath a leafless fruit-tree in a pair of patched mother-made knickerbockers damp at the knees from continual heedless contacts with the wintry soil.' Always Llewelyn respected this brother's judgment and sense of rectitude, always he confidently accepted the fact of his devoted love.

When Llewelyn was very small, with 'cradle straw scarce out of his breech,' he saw Bertie select the largest of three sugar biscuits and hide it away for future consumption as they played together. Unobserved Llewelyn substituted his own smaller biscuit and hurriedly ate the larger. Bertie never forgot this incident, 'so deeply impressed was he that so newly-born an infant could contrive to be master of such a knavery,' and it must have seemed to him that throughout their lives Llewelyn succeeded in securing the larger biscuit. It was ever a source of perplexity to him that John, Theodore, and Llewelyn, with little apparent comparative effort, achieved celebrity such as he, with his solid merit and years of steady application, had been unable to attain. His slight seniority gave him the leadership in boyhood, but even then Llewelyn's quick brain and power to win by personal charm placed him at least on equal terms. So Bertie, while ever devotedly protective of his younger brother, felt always a striving to rivalry. Soon after Llewelyn was married and Bertie went to visit him, Llewelyn's wife was astonished at their assiduity in playing draughts together hour after hour while they were snowed up at Montoma, each determined to win more games than the other. 'I played Bertie over seventy games of draughts,' wrote Llewelyn to their sister Gertrude, 'and he was 4 up in the end.'

Behind the kitchen garden wall at Montacute was a plot of pear trees, under which John and Theodore had in their time dug deep holes and underground passages in the clay sub-soil. This plot became the especial property and playground of 'the Three,' and a rough lean-to shed built by Theodore against the high wall was gradually converted, mainly by the efforts of the future architect, into the Mabelulu (May-Ber-Lulu, for Llewelyn was always known to his family and friends as Lulu) Castle. Here, with May as chate-laine preparing food over a bonfire built by her brothers and presiding over the tea-table, the Three entertained visitors, who, while Bertie brandished a wooden dagger above their heads, were compelled to sign their names and write some verse in the visitors' book. Long after Bertie had abandoned the dagger and after all three had

grown up, visitors signed the 'Mabelulu Visitors' Book,' which remained in Llewelyn's possession all his life. The earliest signatures belong to the summer of 1895; among the last, in 1911 and 1912, are those of Llewelyn's friends in early manhood, Louis Wilkinson, Lionel Room, and Laurence Riley. Dated 3rd September, 1903, unaccompanied by any verse, appears the neatly pencilled inscription, 'Thomas Hardy—a wayfarer.'

At Sherborne Bertie saved all his pocket-money to buy building materials for the Mabelulu improvements. Llewelyn was never good at saving or resisting the lure of chocolates, but he contributed his share by annually expending his birthday money on pots and pans and crockery at Miss Sparkes's 'everything' shop in the village. With Miss Sparkes, as he tells in 'The Village Shop' in *A Baker's Dozen*, he was a favoured customer, his boyish beauty and charm winning the old maid's heart, so that she would make him presents from cherished valuables preserved in a sailor's ditty box and admit him to the large garden behind the house, where her stolid middle-aged nephew tended the flowers and vegetables and a parrot talked from its cage in a pear tree.

At the start of summer holidays Llewelyn accompanied Bertie to select his purchases at the timber yard, and when the wood was delivered, they were up before dawn to begin work. When Bertie was fourteen and Llewelyn eleven, they were like a plumber and his 'lad'; while Bertie drove in his nails with skilled precision, Llewelyn added 'the anguish of hammered fingers to the unexpected discomfort of sunless unwarmed winds.' In the 'end room' which they shared—where their brother Littleton one night broke down one of the beds in a practical demonstration of how to play rugger—they set an alarm clock to wake them in the small hours; they had to steal stealthily downstairs, for once their father heard them on the lawn at three in the morning and sent them back to bed. When together they sat, hungry for breakfast, waiting for the household to assemble for morning prayers, their father would notice their soaked and muddy boots, and rubbing his hands in recollection of his own boyish exploits, would remark benevolently: 'Well, my boys, I see you have been out early.'

Sending greetings to Llewelyn on his fiftieth birthday, only eighteen months before his own death, Bertie wrote:

Lulu, my very loved brother, I would ask you to give, as I would, some ten years of life if we could have again two weeks at the ages of 16 to 19 or perhaps better

at 9 to 12 in the summer holidays. No! I would not ask you to share in the gift of years but would add two or four more of my own did the Gods accept them for that exchange. How, how awake I should be for the tang of every minute! I knew those days valuable, but had I known they were as full of all beauty & happiness as they were I should have stored their good more consciously in my mind. . . . As I think of you now & as you have been. . . . I do little but praise those days & what you have given to my life.

Two years later, reviving recollections for the memoir of Bertie in *Somerset Essays* and crying, 'Gone, gone, gone, my brother who shared with me my childhood memories and forgot nothing,' Llewelyn was reminded of that old illusion of permanence as he recalled how, on summer evenings, they all played 'Jabberwock,' 'a game invented by my brother John, with the acacia on the top lawn as "home."'

With what fleet feet, tennis-shoe shod, we would race along the terrace-walk and up the narrow garden path by Willie's wood, and across the lawns slippery with dew; while every moment the garden grew dimmer and dimmer, an incense-breathing garden populated by creatures fabulously fitted with goblin eyes for seeing in the dark, owls that flew silently out of the leafy obscurities of the sycamore, bats that flickered with high-toned cries to and fro above the drive, and nectar-sipping moths with back and wings fur-covered, sumptuous and soft as silk, exploring with fixed stare each lavender spike and each yellow cavern of the evening primroses now no longer limp. In those laughing hours it was impossible to think of life as ever ending, so reassuring was the sound of tittering lovers at the back gate and the trit-trot of horses' feet growing fainter along the dusty Stoke road; and with the light of the lamp, its shade painted by my sister Gertrude, shining steadily from the drawing-room window, where our mother sat reading to our father as he worked quietly at his netting, a string firmly looped over one black slipper.

Work on the Mabelulu occupied only the summer holidays; the wooden walls under the pear trees were too damp at other seasons. The Easter holidays were the time of birds'-nesting, a pursuit approved by their father, who taught them to take only one egg from a nest, lest the bird desert, and to blow the eggs with a little hole at each end. There was a memorable morning when they discovered a rare hawfinch's nest; rushing home, they did not hesitate to disturb the vicar in the sanctity of his study, where his excitement equalled theirs as he identified the egg beyond doubt by reference to his cherished Bewick's *History of British Birds*. Their expeditions took them many miles through fields and woods. All the Powyses were tireless walkers, and thus early Llewelyn acquired his life-long delight in long country rambles.

In the Christmas holidays the chimney cowl was eagerly watched for when the wind blew from the north-east, promising frost or snow, and in the evenings, as the thermometer fell, the boys re-

peatedly ran out to throw water down the yard to prepare the morrow's slide. Before breakfast they were out to test the ice on the water-butt; after bible reading they ran to the ponds of Montacute Hill 'in the hope that they might already bear.' There was rare skating on the miles of flood-water over the low-lying flats stretching to Sedgemoor, when 'half of the county of Somerset would lie before us white as a sheet.'

Christmas itself was anticipated even in September; the best branches of mistletoe were marked while the ground of the glebe orchard was strewn with fallen apples. All day on Christmas Eve the two boys collected, in big baker's baskets, moss and fir for the church decorations, holly and mistletoe for the vicarage. At midnight the church choir sang carols outside, the children crowding together to listen in dressing-gowns and blankets, till their father's window opened and they heard his voice giving thanks and the season's greetings to the men. Very early the boys were up to examine their stockings and presents, and had eaten quantities of sweets and biscuits before the family prayers which preceded breakfast. Even morning service in church 'was not irksome,' especially if Bertie and Llewelyn secured seats where they could whisper together 'and meditate upon Mrs. Hodder's turkey that had been hanging "in the pride of its grease" head downwards in the larder for the last week.' After the turkey, plum pudding, and mince pies, their father distributed the contents of a hamper sent from the Johnson aunts in Norfolk; after tea at the crowded table, 'the hall bell would ring to announce that the Christmas-tree was ready in the school-room.'

This was the most valued part of the whole day. It was on the Christmas-tree that we hung the presents that we gave to each other.

Llewelyn was never allowed to forget how, as a very small boy, he had purchased from Miss Sparkes a present which he loved too well to part with; after nearly half a century, John in his *Autobiography* and Littleton in his memoirs both remembered the finding of the parcel addressed 'To Lulu from Lulu'!

There have been critics who have sought sardonically to attribute Llewelyn's paganism to reaction against an austere upbringing in a puritanical parsonage, but they can have read scantily of his writings. In *Skin for Skin*, in *Love and Death*, in dozens of his essays, he recalls loving memories of happy boyhood. The scenes of 'A Somerset Christmas,' in *A Baker's Dozen*, flitted vividly before his mind's eye as he lay writing in his last year of life.

Sherborne

IN one of his last *Swiss Essays* Llewelyn remembered how, at the age of eleven, in September 1895, he was sent for the first time to boarding school. While his mother, Littleton, and Gertrude sought vainly to hearten and console him, 'I cried, I remember, without stint.'

How could I reconcile myself to leaving my mother, my brothers and sisters, and the happy garden of my home? Well do I recollect sitting on the green seat that used to stand under the bush on the tennis lawn below the drive, looking through the umbrageous recesses of a distant elm-tree and trying to believe in the coming of a time when once again I would be so impossibly privileged as to be able to gaze upon those lofty arboreal bowers, the favourite haunts of owls on summer evenings.

Neither at the Sherborne 'Prep.,' under Mr. W. H. Blake, where his brothers had been before him, nor afterwards at Sherborne School itself, was he unhappy. John, with his eccentricities, his abstraction, and his habit of voracious reading, suffered agonies from ragging till he secured immunity by an eloquent appeal before the assembled school. Theodore had been so wretched that, instead of proceeding to Sherborne, he was sent to a private school. Littleton alone had delighted in public-school life. With his sweet and serene temperament, he loved and enjoyed life with the same zest as Llewelyn, with the difference that, while Littleton conformed with convention and accepted circumstances as he found them, Llewelyn rebelled against the limiting restrictions imposed by society on individual fulfilment.

Llewelyn's personal charm, good looks, and happy gaiety assured his popularity. He was too well liked, and too responsive to being liked, to feel resentment against the system which sought to suppress individuality and to mould serviceable pillars of the social structure. Admiration for Littleton, whose name by then was celebrated throughout the West Country for his cricket and football, inspired eagerness to succeed at games, so insuring the approval of masters and boys. Though he secured his cricket cap at the 'Prep.,' imagination made him too nervous to succeed as a batsman. 'It's no good, Tom,' he told Littleton: 'When a straight ball comes along, I get a funny feeling in my stomach.' In the holidays he spent hours

dribbling a ball up and down the lawn to gain ball-control; he became captain of football at the 'Prep.' and of the Colts at the School, but never grew heavy enough to mature as a forward. He was perturbed by his slowness in growing, and Littleton remembers how, accompanying him over to a match at Yeovil, he would fling up his head and strut past any small man on the pavement to show that some grown men were shorter than himself.

Apart from John, whose precocity almost qualified him as a prodigy, and Littleton, who conformed intelligently with school curriculum, the Powyses were slow in development, perhaps because the communal pleasures of their home life left little time or inclination for study. Llewelyn, as his letters show, was an exceptionally backward boy. At eleven, he wrote and spelt like a child fresh from the nursery; even at nineteen the future master of prose wrote 'recieved' and 'innocense' and missed an *m* from 'communion.' He drew better than he wrote; the sketches monopolizing most of the space in letters to his mother suggest a natural talent for drawing. Many of his boyish letters had telegraphic terseness, like one in the autumn of 1896:

DEAR MOTHER,

Highest I have ever been I was third last week cant write long went along the Yeo with a nother boy—boy fell in (Sketch)

I am

LULU POWYS.

When his letters were longer, they were fuller of questions about home than of his own doings: was the Mabelulu all 'rite,' did the 'Mistertions want training,' had the hole in the wall near the Mabelulu 'got eggs in it yet,' and would Katie 'tell Willie to go to all the nests we found and blow the eggs and put them in our cabene?' Always he was full of love and yearning for home: 'O for the wings for wings of a dove I would fly away home and fall in the arms of my Mother I am so longing for holadays.' To this he added, remembering that he had said nothing of his school pursuits and might be considered to be too much occupied with anticipated pleasure, 'But still we would not enjoy them if did not work before.'

In January 1899 he left the 'Prep.' for Sherborne School. During the following Easter holidays he and his younger brother Willie contracted whooping cough and were sent to Weymouth to convalesce. In *A Baker's Dozen* appear sundry memories of Weymouth, where for years the family went for their annual seaside holiday and

where the children recuperated from illness. There in the late summer of 1893, after Nelly's death, when the younger children had been ill of scarlet fever, they saw a soldier 'in the old-fashioned red coat of his time' pursued by an infuriated mob till he was overtaken and felled by a blow in the back. The children were hurried away by their faithful nurse, Emily Clare, but Llewelyn never forgot 'that first glimpse of the animal ferocity of man,' which generated 'a deep distrust of every programme of social amelioration that relies upon, or condones, periods of lawlessness for the attainment of Utopian ends.'

During this Easter holiday of 1899 Llewelyn and Willie ran wild. They would be out 'looking for birds' nests on Lodmoor before breakfast,' when Llewelyn would carry his small brother on his back over 'its wide shallow lagoons, indifferent to wet boots and stockings.' Such expeditions were ill designed for a ready recovery from whooping cough, and Llewelyn afterwards believed that the prolongation of this childish complaint, which at the time seemed a lucky chance in keeping him away from school, was possibly responsible for his lifelong weakness of the chest. In the previous year a cold had delayed his return to school a fortnight beyond the beginning of term. In succeeding winters he was often no sooner recovered of a cold than he caught another.

When Willie went to the 'Prep.' in the autumn of 1899, it fell to Llewelyn to look after him as he had been looked after by Bertie, and he dutifully reported to his mother on 1st October, 1899:

I went a walk with Willie he says he is enjoying himself and is working hard. . . . He was in very good spirits. I do my best to look after him, and I think I am successful.

When, three years later, Willie entered Sherborne School and became a fag, Llewelyn wrote to Bertie: 'I am very lenient to him about washing up; much more so than you were, you scoundrel.'

He sorely missed Bertie after his leaving school to be articled to a Yeovil architect. 'I do wish I could see you again,' he wrote in his first letter after their parting, ending 'your loving little Boob,' and later in the term, after a Sunday walk with another boy: 'I thought of you all the way—I always do. Goodbye old Hedgehog I do love you so.' School convention never succeeded in subduing natural affection among the brothers; though they appeared casually indifferent before their fellows to avoid 'ragging', when alone they flung their arms about each other and kissed in natural demon-

stration of their devotion. In *Somerset Essays* Llewelyn remembered how another boy once elected to see Bertie off, how he had walked silent behind, listening to the 'hard talk' of the school world between his seniors, and how the other boy's departure had 'marked the real beginning of our holidays, with freedom to kiss without being laughed at, and with freedom to talk about our sisters.' All their lives the brothers demonstrated their mutual affection without restraining embarrassment; as a schoolmaster Littleton necessarily observed more deference to convention, and when on the station platform he greeted Llewelyn, a man of forty returned from America, Llewelyn reported to John, 'I gave him a kiss, but he looked rather nervously at the ticket collector.'

Deprived of Bertie, Llewelyn's loving heart sought other objects for affection. He loved Willie, but habit of years with Bertie inspired a craving for intimacy with contemporaries or immediate seniors. He formed an ardent friendship with Lionel Mylrea, and though Mylrea left Sherborne about a year before he did, they corresponded for some time afterwards. Inevitably, through absence of contact and divergence of interests, the correspondence eventually languished, but Llewelyn never forgot this first intimate friendship, writing to Bertie on 22nd May, 1910: 'You know I love to plumb the furthest depths of *intimacy*—leaving not one single crevice of soul, mind or body unsounded, as it was with Mylrea at Sherborne.' Littleton, a master at King's School, Bruton, warned him against the misconstruction apt to be imposed on affectionate intimacy between schoolboys, and also admonished him on the subject of sex.

From early childhood Llewelyn was susceptible to feminine attraction. His sisters long teased him about Kitty Steel, his playmate on Weymouth sands at the age of four, 'the sight of whom at the end of the terrace,' as he tells in *Dorset Essays*, 'would set my infant's heart fluttering.' Though susceptible, his glance quick to note a merry eye, parted lips, a pretty ankle, he was remarkably constant in his affections; he never lost interest in a woman who had once attracted his senses, remembering her gratefully as the source of the most innocent emotional pleasure, and during his last years of life he corresponded with women he had known in his youth, though time had despoiled their charm and divorced their interests from his.

His first enduring infatuation was for a girl named Angela, whom he met at Studland about his eighteenth year. His brother Theodore

had given up his farm at Sweffling in Suffolk, and elected, in the autumn of 1901, to live a hermit's contemplative life in a labourer's cottage at Studland on his father's allowance of sixty pounds a year. During a summer holiday spent in much boating on the sea, Llewelyn formed a romantic attachment for Angela, though she was then a mere child of twelve or thirteen. He persuaded her to correspond with him, and some seven years later, when he was twenty-five and she about twenty, only one other girl vied with her for supremacy in his emotions.

Bertie was the trusted confidant for all his thoughts and feelings, but with Bertie applying himself with characteristic determination to his profession, it was difficult to devise frequent meetings. On Sundays, when leave out from Sherborne could be obtained, they were indefatigable in travelling on foot or bicycle to meet. Once, when John was staying a week-end with Littleton at Bruton and a meeting was arranged for Sunday afternoon at Cadbury Camp, the supposed site of King Arthur's Camelot, John and Littleton walked the eight miles from Bruton, Llewelyn and Willie six from Sherborne, and Bertie cycled twelve from Montacute.

Later during holidays Bertie was able to spend only short week-ends at Montacute, but Littleton was at home from Bruton and Llewelyn was now of an age to enjoy the company of this grown-up brother more than the predatory pursuits of the juvenile Willie, who already evinced the tastes of woodsman and hunter. In *Skin for Skin* he recalled his boyish admiration for Littleton's athletic prowess: how proud he was when Littleton brought an eleven to play the school, to 'see his familiar and beloved figure at the wicket, so strong, so lithe, so light of action'—how eagerly he would leave his play on hearing the back gate slam to on a summer evening, running to meet his brother returning from a village match, cricket-bag in hand, and breathlessly asking 'how many he had made,' would follow him upstairs and stay chattering till he was ready to go down to supper.

But Littleton's 'passion for athletics was never able to dull for him the pleasure he derived from nature and literature.' As a boy he had built boxes for birds to nest in. He still cherished his collection of butterflies. From their father he and his brother John inherited a delight in wild flowers. He loved long walks over moor and downs, and his joy in fly-fishing was spiced by appreciation of the beauties surrounding the trout and salmon streams he fished. His pleasure

in poetry, in Keats, Wordsworth, and Matthew Arnold, was spontaneous and self-cultivated; while Llewelyn's adventurous mind soon roved beyond the range of his simpler tastes, it was Littleton who introduced him to the habitual reading of the great poets.

Though ten years older he found Llewelyn from fifteen to eighteen a 'most happy and lovable companion.' In *Dorset Essays* Llewelyn recalled as 'one of the happiest days of my life' a long April walk with Littleton from Montacute to the sea, when they started with the dawn, fortified by hot coffee, and ate lunch together under a fir-tree on the top of Lewesdon Hill. The combes of Exmoor were a favourite resort of Littleton's for fishing, and the essay on Exmoor in *Somerset Essays* vividly recalls Llewelyn's first visit on a fortnight's holiday with his elder brother. The excursion is significant of the devoted affection among the Powys brothers and sisters. How many young men in their middle twenties, celebrated for prowess in the sporting world, would have spent hours on the lawn teaching a schoolboy brother to throw a fly in preparation for taking him as the chosen sole companion of a fortnight's moorland holiday! 'It was an adventure,' wrote Llewelyn, 'that influenced my whole life.' From Minehead station they were conveyed in a farm-cart to Malmsmead, the junction of the Doone and Brendon Valleys.

My mood as I rested by my brother's side on the top of Porlock Hill was one of utter happiness. Lying in the heather, I had in my mind no vision of the place to which the cart, not yet to be seen at the crest of the steep road, was about to carry us; I only was aware that the evening sky seemed wider in its circumference than I had ever known it in South Somerset, extending its celestial hoop far off over the wild enfolded hills, and far over a broad sea of speedwell-blue, emphatic of life's fortunate freedoms.

Such moments remained in his memory till death. 'With each one of us,' he was to write in 'the *hand book* of my beliefs,' *Damnable Opinions*, 'it is the simple poetry of our hours, with their joys and their sorrows, that will count at the last.' As a man of fifty, on his bed of sickness, he recalled every happy incident of that far-off Exmoor holiday: the first meal in the old farmhouse, with a deep dish of Devonshire cream, a brown loaf, and boiled eggs, laid on a lamplit table before a peat fire glowing in the open hearth; the walk up Badgery Water to Dunkery Beacon, crossing stretches of burned heather, the charred twigs of which kept loosening his boot-laces, as he remembered nostalgically whenever in Africa he rode

over land devastated by bush fires; the first glimpse in Horner Woods of the wild red deer, such as he had read about at Montacute in Sir John Fortescue's book, a copy of which he carried in his pocket and was continually quoting to Littleton. There on the moor the first wondering notions of his 'poetic faith' began shaping in his mind.

It seemed to him, as he was to write thirty-five years later, that 'Christianity teaches us to despise life.' The social system required that the masses of mankind should spend their lives at distasteful tasks; therefore the priests pronounced self-denial a virtue and promised the unfortunate masses that, if they continued tamely content with their sorry lot on this earth, they were assured of heaven thereafter. It was wrong to feel such happiness as he had felt, lying in the heather on the top of Porlock Hill, for if he did not reconcile himself to the renunciation of such feelings and so value himself on the virtue of his self-denial, how could he be accommodated to years on an office-stool in a smoke-grimed city! He felt the falsity of churches 'with their godly smell, with their punctilious decorations, with their masquerading priests.' The mood of worship was not in these chilly buildings, but under the vaulted roof of the sky before the beauties of Nature. So he 'began to take the spell of the school chapel very lightly—the spell of those queer intervals of silent prayer and of the dim lighted altar.'

Lazily he had lingered beyond his time in lower forms, but now he was promoted to the upper school, to form 'IVA.' Here for the first time he found a teacher to his taste, the 'Mr. R.' of *Confessions of Two Brothers*—the Rev. H. R. King, known as 'Crusoe.' 'Though curiously disillusioned as to the world in general, he was possessed by a passionate devotion for English literature . . . he continually seemed to be hinting of a larger and more gracious world.' In his *Autobiography* John tells how King was one of the two masters 'whose interest in matters of scholarship and learning communicated to me any answering thrill,' and memories of John Powys may have moved King to special interest in Llewelyn. King presided over 'The Duffers,' the school literary society, to which only sixth-form boys were normally elected; though Llewelyn never rose above IVA (and so never sat under John's other interesting master, W. B. Wildman, who taught the upper fifth) he was elected to the Duffers during his last term. Under King's influence he learned to feel 'a thrill at the sight of the first celandine (for no other reason than that old Wordsworth had delighted in it).'

About the same time—in 1902—he fell under the spell of John, ‘that elder brother of mine,’ he wrote two years before his death to Littleton, ‘who is by far the most exciting and God-like figure I have ever had to do with in my life, and whose inspirations have illuminated my life from the days when I sat like a little frog upon his navel.’ This year Littleton became engaged to be married and was no longer available as Llewelyn’s companion during the holidays. But John, who had married in 1896 and was earning his living as a University Extension lecturer, happened to be spending a vacation at Montacute. ‘You never think, Littleton,’ he had said when they were at Cambridge together: ‘why don’t you think? You must think.’ ‘But,’ added Littleton in relating this remark, ‘he never gave me any idea as to what I was to think about.’ Llewelyn had so far impinged on his eldest brother’s consciousness only as a singularly blithe and beautiful child, but now John delightedly recognized in his schoolboy brother an insatiable habit of inquiring thought, illuminated by a lucidity of vision and integrity of feeling that soon defeated in argument his own eloquent subtlety and imaginative speculation. With his gift of dramatic declamation and his training as a teacher, he finally opened Llewelyn’s eyes to the possibilities and beauties of poetry.

‘How happy I was with him,’ wrote Llewelyn in *The Verdict of Bridle-goose* of their being together in California in 1921, ‘have always been with him, with this old Salamander, who is so supersensitive to the dim consciousness of Nature that on more than one occasion I have quarrelled with him because I could not persuade him to sit in a wayside hedge for fear of crushing the waving grasses which grew there.’ All his life Llewelyn never abated the devotion excited in his wakening schoolboy senses for this beloved brother, ‘tall and lean and stooping,’ with ‘his low-browed, primordial, soothsayer’s skull and his long-fingered hands, thin as autumn leaves, the hands of a very old man, and yet with the gripping power of a demon.’ When a Californian girl accused him of suffering from a ‘brother complex,’ he exclaimed:

Have not I for a quarter of a century followed in the wake of John Cowper? All that I am I owe to him. Like a sagacious Sancho Panza, I have ever kept close behind his great medieval wain full of the foison of I know not what rich harvest-field. And whatever out of its largess his ample wagon gave to the wayside hedge, that have I had the wit to garner and, with the panniers of my Dapple well stuffed, to carry shrewdly off to the nearest market. For let them say what they will, it is John alone of all of us who can be likened to the forked lightning, he alone has

undisputed access to those deep, cool wells where the gods themselves let down their buckets.

So he wrote in 1926, when, as John tells in the *Autobiography*, Llewelyn's reputation as far surpassed his own with the American literary intelligentsia as Theodore's with the English.

Later, in 1932, he told an interviewer: 'John has genius, I and Theodore originality.' Concerned lest Theodore should be annoyed, he warned him of the interview. Theodore was not annoyed. 'Well, he has always considered himself a genius,' he said; 'from a child he thought of himself as the king of the fairies.' Louis Wilkinson, in *Welsh Ambassadors*, tells how in the earliest days of their friendship, when he had published only lecture-syllabuses and two slight volumes of verse, John had 'complete faith in his own genius, and not only in his own, but in that of each of his intimates.' He believed that his own circle—himself, his brothers, Louis Wilkinson, Bernard O'Neill, the old poet Alfred de Kantzow, and a few others—would live in history as the most important literary circle of the time. The eccentricity of his genius had segregated him from his schoolfellows, whose baiting had early inured him to the persecution that genius always receives from the herd. He impressed everybody—as Louis Wilkinson testified, not only in *Welsh Ambassadors*, but in the caricature of 'Jack Welsh' in *The Buffoon*—by the prodigality of his gifts, which enabled him to 'carry off flagrant banalities, lunatic assertions, inept speculations.'

But while they all admired and marvelled, most of his friends, like Louis Wilkinson, felt the want of tangible evidence of his genius as he passed through his thirties, into his early forties, publishing nothing. Llewelyn alone never doubted his brother's powers; he was always 'the man I love and admire and am astonished by more than anyone else I have known in my life upon earth.' His faith and devotion inspired responsive warmth in John, whose theatrical gestures concealed the continual bruising sustained by a hypersensitive temperament in active contact with life. He became Llewelyn's mentor, and as passing years disclosed the singular lucidity and responsiveness of Llewelyn's mind, he confided his inmost thoughts to him more completely and unreservedly than is possible between man and woman. The love and understanding between these two brothers finds no parallel in English literary history; such spontaneous sympathy between men has been despised by the conventional Englishman as characteristic of the emotional French. Llewelyn ever proudly

avowed his devotion and dedicated his first separately published book to John, who, on his side, mirrored their relationship in the brothers Anderson in *Wood and Stone* and in Rook and Lexie Ashover of *Ducdame*. In doubt or trouble Llewelyn always turned to 'Daddy Jack,' the name by which the boy of eighteen called his mentor of thirty.

John was no follower of their father's conventional religion. His imagination was forever fashioning a mystical philosophy, but he always stubbornly argued in favour of the soul's survival. In these days Llewelyn, troubled by his inability to believe in his father's God, gratefully accepted any argument calculated to confirm his faith, but John's gift of illuminating the beauties of poetry and Nature intensified his inclination to such exultant moods as he had felt on Exmoor.

His disbelief in the benevolence of an omnipotent deity was confirmed by association with his brother Theodore, who believed, as he once told Louis Wilkinson, that God is 'the life that is within you.' With this belief, the 'shallow, unreflective life' of modern society seemed to Theodore blasphemy: confronted with the choice of a career, he had chosen farming as the pursuit nearest to Nature, but even this he had soon resigned to devote his life to contemplative thought untrammelled by the trivialities of daily business. Through his mother he had inherited Cowper's tendency to melancholy; while he shrank from life's afflictions, he lived in continual dread of death. In this Llewelyn's buoyant spirit could not follow him. He was irritated by the sight of Theodore sitting beside his mother, whose own morbid temperament accorded complete sympathy, both 'heartbroken over nothing.' Death, he argued, was to be dreaded as the end of all things, but its possible intervention at any moment was the better reason for making the most of life while it lasted. This argument Theodore always declared to be false. 'We must learn to welcome Death,' he said: 'Death is the great Father of all things; for without him there is no life.'

But when Theodore was not immersed in a mood of depression, 'when'—as Llewelyn wrote in *Skin for Skin*—'he has not seen too much of you, when he thinks he has enough money in his tea-chest to store his cellar with coal, when he thinks the common people regard him with a friendly eye, . . . and when he knows that you are not making love to any *very young girls*,' then he had 'his days, his hours, his moments.' His mind was stored with long-pondered

reading of the Bible, of Rabelais, of Burton and Jeremy Taylor. He would utter aphorisms with dry, sardonic humour and sharp, double-edged meaning. To the world he was an ineffectual idler who wantonly denied to his talents the worldly rewards they might have won. But to the few who appreciated his value—to Llewelyn, to Bernard O'Neill, and to Louis Wilkinson—he expanded as a rare companion.

Of Studland, which he never re-visited after Theodore left it for Chaldon in 1904, Llewelyn's memories were fraught with 'radiance and gladness . . . the radiance of youth and shimmering seas.' At their brother's cottage he and Bertie were emancipated from the restrictions imposed by their father's position at Montacute; they could make casual acquaintances without consideration of class distinction, drink beer at the bars of the local inns, indulge in freak or frolic without fear of shocking the seemliness of sedate parishioners. 'Booze nights,' which included New Year's Eve, were long-anticipated functions to which guests were invited weeks beforehand. Each paid an equal share to the cost of drink, which was conveyed from the inn to Theodore's cottage in a wheelbarrow, two brothers taking turns to wheel the third, whose duty was to guard the liquor from mishap. It was in 1902, on the way to such a festival at Studland, that Llewelyn enjoyed the longest walk of his life. He tells in *Dorset Essays* how he and Bertie set out from Montacute on bicycles, which broke down at Mappowder in central Dorset, and how, passing through Milton Abbas, Bere Regis, Wareham, and Corfe Castle, they completed the journey on foot.

At Studland, too, he could read what he liked. Here he first read Rabelais—perhaps also Burton, whom he describes in *Rats in the Sacristy* as 'in my opinion the greatest prose-writer of the greatest age of prose-writing that England has seen.' In his two essays on Rabelais, written with an interval of some fourteen years between, he indicates the impression created by this first reading on his inquiring mind. He did not yet applaud Rabelais' abuse of priests; he was still too troubled by his failing belief in conventional religion, too accustomed to associate churchmen with the admired figure of his father, nor had he acquired the knowledge to measure the mischief perpetuated by priestcraft through the centuries. As Lytton Strachey wrote, Rabelais was 'the best-natured satirist who ever lived . . . of all reformers and revolutionaries he was the most genial, the most urbane.' It was Rabelais' zest in life and contempt for humbug that delighted Llewelyn; he was 'a philosophic optimist,'

'a true individualist' who believed that 'each human being should fulfil his destiny without let or hindrance,' 'the champion of freedom, the liberator of the human spirit, and before his God-like hilarity the conventions tremble.'

As John and Theodore inspired Llewelyn with their own enthusiasm for Rabelais, they had been themselves introduced to his work by Dr. Bernard Price O'Neill. Of 'this man of unique genius' John has drawn a lively likeness in his *Autobiography*. Some seven years John's senior, he was a qualified physician when they met in 1897; he became, not only John's, but the valued friend of every member of the Powys family. It was soon his habit to spend his summer holiday partly at Montacute, partly with John and Theodore, and when others of the family established homes of their own, he divided his time among them. With wisdom as mellow as his humour, 'Bernie' was a true Rabelaisian, loving life and savouring its salt with eagerness tempered by shrewdness. Since, in John's phrase, his discretion was deep as his comprehension was wide, he never betrayed a confidence, and won an individual intimacy with friends by instinctive sympathy. His goodness was 'the goodness of Nature herself, something easy, inevitable, spontaneous, non-moral, beyond the ordinary distinctions of right and wrong,' and while he won their hearts, he charmed their fancies with his trained taste in the refinements which played no part in the Powys country upbringing, wine, music, the theatre, 'the argot of the market-place.'

He was an adept in the extremist pages of all the Cagliostros of modern literature. He knew every drawing of Beardsley, every quip of Whistler, every paradox of Wilde. But below these, while he seemed for ever rolling upon his tongue some Shandean extravagance, it was Rabelais who garnished his most characteristic accents with the full body of their idiomatic savour.

When he first met Dr. O'Neill, Llewelyn was only thirteen, a boy of 'about the average height, with golden hair, of a frank and affectionate nature, and of an amorous disposition.' But five years later, in the summer of 1902, they stayed together with Theodore at Studland, where they 'roamed about the village and the shore, making friends with the fishermen and talking with a group of children on the beach.' Together they climbed the Toad Rock and on 'an afternoon of golden sunshine' visited the Tilly Whim Caves. Returning late from a long walk, when the gulls wheeled overhead in the gathering dusk, Dr. O'Neill wondered what Theodore would be doing in their absence, and Llewelyn replied that by such an hour

Theodore would be safely ensconced indoors. 'Our walks and talks were most harmonious,' writes Dr. O'Neill, 'and I could not have wished for a more congenial and responsive companion.' From the time of this holiday, Bernie O'Neill was on terms of intimate good-fellowship with Llewelyn, never allowing his seniority to disturb adolescent self-consciousness and so winning affectionate confidence.

The juxtaposition in the published *Letters* of three letters to Bertie between March 1901 and November 1902 reveals the rapidity of Llewelyn's development under the influence of free association with his elder brothers and their friend. The first of the three is a brief, hasty, ill-spelt schoolboy's note on a football match, but after nineteen months, though he has 'fallen off at footer, and Bertie you know how keen I was on it,' it has become only a 'small irritation' beside the moods induced by introspection. While religious belief was undermined, the superstitions of conventional dogma still retained the power to stigmatize the formation of a rational philosophy as a device of the Devil.

'What is the good of struggling against lust when after death, there is the end, total annihilation, absolute dark—nothingness,' so said the devil in poor L. P., then afterwards came a still small voice speaking softly and very kindly—'O Lulu, and is this to be the outcome of so many years struggling—so many victories, reverses, and repentances. Buck up! Lulu how will you be able to lead men if you are incompetent to command yourself!'

Thus 'torn in two,' he had 'a very long talk' with the headmaster, Canon Westcott, who doubtless endorsed the 'still small voice' and urged, in default of superstitious belief in eternity's rewards for good social conduct on earth, the wise worldly counsel that conformity, self-control, and self-denial were requisite in a successful leader of men. His father supported with 'weighty and wise words.' John was 'so very, very good to me, so very kind,' and lent him books, but his counsel has not survived. Bernie O'Neill's response to an account of 'religious thoughts and doubts' and 'failings many and grievous' was preserved by being copied into Llewelyn's diary:

Thank you for your two excellent letters, full of spring and delight, the latter perhaps a little despondent in tone in one place, but quite needlessly so, for that which grown-up people and black-browed fogies call religion and morality are usually nothing else but the ideas of the stupid and the hypocritical. All morality and religion are summed up in justice and charity, and I am quite sure you have gained in those two qualities since you first went to Sherborne.

During the first five months of 1903 Llewelyn kept the earliest of his diaries, which has value as a document of adolescence, disclosing

the lurking disquietude over his failing faith, the contrast between his normal schoolboy's keenness on games and his growing love for literature, his heart's hunger to love either boy or girl, and his life-long delight in the open air of the countryside.

Jan. 10th, Saturday. . . . Went for a ride in the afternoon—past Thorn Cross.

Jan. 11th, Sunday. Went as usual to church and father's class; and afterwards went a walk along the line with Lucy and Katie. Freezing hard. 12th. Walked with the family to Bearly—found good ice. . . . 13th. Went to Bearly with Gertrude, May, and Willie—had very good skating. Alas! how soon are my resolutions broken. O God, help me to resist evil.

14th. Went to Bearly to skate with Gerrard, Gertrude, May, Katie, and Willie. Enjoyed it very much. Came home and walked to Pit Pond with Willie and Katie—we walked on to the island.

15th. Got up at 5.45 and went to Pit with Willie . . . had a very good half-hour's skating. Had breakfast and then started again for Pit, where we were followed by Tom, who was so good, so like he used to be, in fact again my heart was wrung, this time because I was reminded how it used to be—not at the change. My God! My Christ! it is hard so very very hard. Had lunch and then went to Pit with the family. Father skated—Mother walked to the island—Tom was so full of Mabel, taking her round and round. It is cruel to be divided from one for whom one had lived—it is difficult to be cheerful and not jealous.

16th. Went with Willie by train to Langport—had very good skating and returned by the 3.30. It is thawing. Damn! I pray for snow. Throughout the cold weather I have missed Bertie all day and everywhere—even more so than usual.

17th. Drove into Yeovil with Katie, and afterwards in the afternoon played football. And in the evening made Willie cry, what a devil I am—Good God forgive me. I consider this (brutality) worse than all impurity and dishonesty.

18th. Spent the usual Sunday, enjoyed reading the lessons. O Almighty God what a weakling thou didst make when thou formest poor Lulu—give me thy help and strength that I may live a better and purer life.

19th. Went to a meet at the Five Ashes and followed the harriers; in my excitement I showed the hunters where the poor little creature had fled. I am very glad to say that it escaped after a hard run; I still feel sorry. . . .

20th. Drove into Sherborne with Katie; looked over the School buildings. Katie is the most delightful person to shew over anywhere—so enthusiastic.

21st. . . . Willie caught a cat and a rat in gins not more than five yards from each other both yelling. The cat had come after the rat and had been gripped by its fore hoof within a few yards of its prey.

22nd. Again I went after the hounds with May, Katie, and Willie; we had many good runs, and met Bob Chaffey. Came home with him, and went up Hedgecock after pigeons—Bob missed 3 shots. Bob Chaffey is an 'honest cod'—he rather reminds me of a Rabelaisian character or of a Bernie—he has absolutely no memory but a strong sense of humour.

23rd. . . . read a life of Charles Dickens. Played football.

24th. Went ferritting with Bob Chaffey—had very great fun, being quite hardened to the cries of the poor little animals which render to us our 'sport.' . . . Bob came over to Montacute for tea and supper.

25th. Took a class of very delightful little boys. Had the usual Sunday. Cupid, that rascal! has slightly wounded me with that lass with the long golden hair.

26th. Went out ferriting with Bob Chaffey and Willie—had rather fun. Willie is very good at killing rabbits. . . . I went to dinner with Bob. . . .

27th. . . . In the afternoon I went with Gertrude, Katie, and Willie to look at foxes holes in Hedgecock. In the evening went to a comunicans meeting, which annoyed me as I did not want to go. I wish I had a stronger will.

28th. Packed with Mother. Came back to Sherborne for the last time. I feel sad when I think it really is the last term here where I have been so very happy.

29th. Played football. Bartleet has not come back yet. Worked in hall and read Lantor.

30th. Spent a very dull day.

31st. Went to the Library to get out Tom Jones, but they have not got it. I suppose the authorities think it is too baudy for us. I then looked for Hazlitt but they have not got him—why? I played footer against Kings, and then read to Willie Barry Cornwall's life of the Divine Charles Lamb.

Feb. 1st, Sunday. Went to holy comunion. But alas, I am in a very whirlpool of doubts, in fact I know not what to think. . . .

2nd. Played football and went to private Tu. . . .

3rd. Worked very hard at Prometheus Vincutus and had tea in my study with Willie.

4th. Played football etc. I had a very enjoyable half hour reading to Willie Edgar A. Poe. I revel in the RAVEN BELLS and others.

5th. Heard from father—'I was very pleased to hear from my six sons on Monday morning. It made me feel quite proud of you all. I trust you may all do good in your time according to your ability.' O My God! what a splendid Father to have—what a pillar for the old faith. I have fallen in love with little C— C—.

6th. Recieved a letter from Angela. I am so very fond of her. I think often of her. I feel sad when I realize that I may never see her again. She writes 'Dear Lulu, thank you very much indeed for the dear little charms. . . . My birthday is in March but I do not mind having presents before. . . . I hope you had nice holidays and my love to Bertie. Your loving Angela.' Am working very hard at Pro Sulla and Prometheus Vincutus. I have very little time for reading the mighty masters. I am told I am to join the Duffers—I very much hope I am.

7th. Stayed in all the afternoon, and wrote four letters—to Jack, Tom and Bertie, also to Gotto. In the evening Todd came up from H. R. K. to tell me I had been elected a member of the 'Duffers.'

8th. Sunday. Went to the Vicarage—found — very dull—a limper after Aristocracy. Dear old Canon! Had tea with Willie. Wrote an essay on the immortal Charles Lamb—sent it to Jack and asked his advice. Heard a very good sermon.

9th. Played a hard game v. Kings. I am no fighter. . . . Had a talk with old Crusoe King; he wants me to read an essay on Emerson—he is going to lend me Mathew Arnold's prose works. Wrote to Jack about H. R. K.

10th. Had a 'punt about.' . . .

11th. Worked hard all the morning—played Kings in a Junior—beat them—enjoyed the game very much—I felt quite the old keenness. I think that my being humbled about footer has been very good for me—barred one year playing in the Junior the next. Well, well, I'm quite used to it now—at first it was a bit hard. . . .

Heard from Jack—a good letter on De Quincey—‘His soul delighted to sit in solitary places and lift up her voice upon lonely hills. His is the whisper which shakes the leaves of the untrodden forest and the shriek of the tempest rising to peal upon peal of reverberated thunder that rolls over the battlefield of our dreams, with confused alarms of immeasurable disaster! I like his sonorous—yet slightly artificial—style when he is in his best mood. But he is a garrulous, voluminous fellow of very unequal merit, and I think his idea of humour is the silliest thing in the world. Much love to Old Falstaff—how rings his purse?’

12th. Read Emerson in the afternoon.

13th. I recieved a very just rebuke from Jack. I feel very humbled, and hardly like thinking about (it)—when will I learn to know myself. The very night before the senior v. Kings—I believe I shall not be able to play on account of my knee. Now I pray with all my soul to God that he will not take this from me. It will be too hard, too hard!

14th. We beat Kings by 2 tries and a goal. My knee got well almost at once. I am a feeble, weak, abandoned wreck. Where is my old faith?! my old sense of duty! my old strickness! Lulu, be true to yourself . . . (quotation). . . . Recieved a postcard from that most ‘honest of all cods’ Bernie! it had a fine portrait of a laughing cavalier. How I should enjoy again to ciple with the honest Docter.

15th. Sunday. Read Guinevere to the Duffers. I enjoyed reading very much, as I always do. Had a short letter from J. C. P. He will lend me some books on Emerson. What would I give now to have the same innocence! and faith as I had when I was a little boy. How quickly all has changed. In the place of that curly headed little rogue ‘that other me’ is now—a hardened liar! a licentious beast! a hipocrit, God knows what! I fear me of the consequences if I do not change. Let me try to live a pure, upright, kind, happy loving life. Instead of a filthy, low, hard, remorseful one. . . . (quotation) . . .

16th. . . . Read Emerson.

17th. Went a walk with Dixon, across Lenthay Common and up by Silver Lake. The whole day had a most delightful appearance of spring, the birds singing, the daisies coming out, the grass green. We talked on many subjects, the most interesting being that most of us who were now the most intimate friends should in five years have almost forgotten each other. . . .

18th. . . . Went to a lecture given by a ‘funny man.’ What a wrench it is to have to listen while a man talks B——s for an hour and a half. . . .

19th. Had a half holiday. Went a walk with Dixon and Bartleet. . . .

20th. Read Emerson’s life. . . .

22nd. Sunday. . . . Heard a most idiotic sermon in the evening.

23rd. Recieved a good letter from Mylrea, also one from old Bob. He writes—‘Excellent Lulu, I write at once so as to clear the air for my vile employment. I am glad Angela has written, but do not bind thyself upon the wheel. Your letter included many hidden things, sayings deep and dark, august sayings, wise sayings, loud and piercing, proclaiming on high the joy of the Lord.’ Also Mylrea writes, ‘I wonder whether you really like me still.’ What a curious thought to come from you! I am almost afraid to write on paper what I want to say. ‘Like’ as I have before told you can hardly be applied to my feeling for you. Surely you know that I love you. You have always first place in my prayers and I have never forgotten

you; I have always prayed that my love for you alone may not decrease, and my prayers have been answered.' . . .

27th. Willie (Old Falstaff) wrote to Jack for money; he recieved this morning an answer: 'My dear Willie, Good Heavens! what slaughter, massacre, wholesale destruction, and inernal death! Eyes, legs and tails of all the beasts of all the wild wood of the West wink, dance, and wag before me! You will not at this rate leave furred or feathered thing alive. So you are living on oranges and find the deep cavities of your Falstaffian guts lean, shrivelled, empty, and hollow-sounding as a beggar's wallet! And you add a word to your letter? a postscript? an after-thought? a mild remark about the state of Europe? a clearing of your throat, a farewell gesture, a gentle pressure of hand upon hand, a glance of the eye (a slow closing thereof)? Well, who am I to understand signs and noddings and winkings and pointings of the fingers? Am I Daniel? am I Homer? It is wrong and wicked to give to rogues, vagabonds, poachers, and game-stealers—but still, if you look aside for a moment and hold out your dirty palm! Oranges! Oranges! Oranges! Goodbye William of Orange! Yrs. Jack.'

28th. Played in the Two Cock; defeated the School house. Had tea at Ford's. . . . Came up and read Burns; Barry read Venus and Adonis.

Mar. 1st. Sunday. Wrote to Mother—read paper on Education to the Duffers. Heard the worst sermon I ever have heard. . . .

2nd. Played a very successful game of football. Glory! honour! and Praise are at once placed on me—I must be played in the 3 Cock. Am very pleased.

3rd. . . . read John Morley.

4th. Went a walk with Barry and Bartleet to Yeovil—had tea at Maynard's. . . . Arrived home feeling very ill, only to be told that there was no chance of my playing in the 3 Cock. They could not kick out a 2nd XV colour. I went to bed a broken ruin—had a hot bath, all but fainted, cursed my bad luck, and went to sleep miserable.

5th. Woke up feeling fit, Praised God! Dixon called down to Smith—they settle to play me instead of Lang. Am in good spirrits.

7th. Played in the 3 Cock and got beaten; enjoyed the game very much. Went to tea at Ford's with Dixon & Bartleet. Went to dinner with Crusoe. . . .

8th Went to lunch at the Vicarage. Canon Lyon has met Thackeray and Charles Dickens. Went a walk with Willie towards Lenthay, came home and wrote the essay.

9th. . . . Went up to the San with mumps.

10th. Stayed in bed, looked after by Miss Leigh-Clare. Got up in the afternoon and came home in the evening.

11th. Went to the dentist, had one tooth stopped. . . . Went round the garden with May. I enjoyed it all very much. . . .

12th. Went for a run round Lenthay; caught cold. Wrote my essay on Emerson.

14th. Scratched the steeplechase; cold very bad. . . .

15th. Went to the Duffers meeting at the School House. Had a fearful coughing fit in the middle; Will Pott got me water. Crusoe thanked me, saying that 'it was the most eloquent essay that had been heard by the Duffers for many years.' . . . In the morning I went to Holy Comunión. My faith is in no way formed yet; what we are—why we exist! who was Christ? It seems that in what ever way I look on it, I am in the wrong. We must be put on this earth to better the state, not alas! to corrupt it. . . .

16th. . . . My cold very much worse. Shall stop out tomorrow.

17th. Stopped out. Played cards and read Tolstoi. . . .

21st. Point to Point, round by Corton, finished at Osborne—Bartleet 1st, Gates 2nd, Powys 3rd, Dixon 10th—we lost the cup. DAMN.

22nd. . . . Read Coleridge in chapel.

23rd. Rained steadily . . . read Coleridge.

24th. . . . Went to tea with a crowd of Honest Cods. I wonder if Littleton knows what extreme pleasure I get from these teas.

25th. . . . Went to tea with Crusoe and read with him in his greenhouse. Which shall I do? taste the sweet honey! the fair pleasure which the sons of men can give me: it is my last term, all my life before me, why not go with the stream? why this perpetual striving? what does it avail—'Even golden lads and lasses must with chimney sweepers come to dust.' Three more weeks at Sherborne, for the better or for the worse.

26th. Corps parade, went round the town with Barry. Watched some pigs being put into a train. A most revolting sight! but Barry would watch. . . . Went into Cards' study, where was H—— the blue-eyed lad! He had a bath in the evening. I saw him to bed. My God, I love, I love! What a magic there is in a charmed touch, from one who has thy heart. Ha, would Littleton reproach me, I wonder?—surely love heightens my endeavours to be pure.

. . . 29th. Went a walk with Willie. . . . My religion I am afraid is ragged and bare. . . . I often feel I should like to be religious—to serve again with new energy Almighty God!

April 2nd. . . . went round the town with Bartleet—he was amused, as usual, by the many Honest and Odd Cods known by me in Sherborne. My heart is taken from me, H—— of the blue eyes holds it: I love him, love him.

. . . 5th. Had a dull service. Went with W. E. P. to the Vicarage. Came back and had tea with H—— the blue-eyed. My God! how I love, love! Went to supper with G. M. C. after having heard a typical barren sermon from —— . Farewell, old master! may you long teach Euclid, and insert into the brains of wild English youth the art of figures. How many a dry, sapless, unprofitable hour have I spent listening to thee, O Jabberer.

6th. . . . Had a talk with G. M. C. He says you should not give yourself time to doubt. Work! Work! By the sweat of your brow ye will enjoy heaven.

7th. Wrote to H——. He will come out with me on G. Friday. Thank God! . . .

10th. Good Friday! Christ was crucified to-day. My heart aches for H—— who has forsaken me. I go out with Barry. Come back and see Bertie and Harry. Go with them to Johns and to the School chapel. It was fine to see old Bert again, strong, healthy, and hansom. . . .

13th. Spent the usual Monday. Went with A. R. P. and W. E. P. to the park, were caught in a snow storm, Willie saw a fox and was pleased. Saw A. R. P. off, and had a spread. Went a walk to the Mt. of Olives instead of hearing the concert.

14th. Said Goodbye to the dear old School. . . . Is it nought to have been at School here? to have romped and frolicked? Came home and went a walk with May. Afterward to a prayer meeting: I am trying once more to pray, to live aright—God give me strength.

15th. Rained. Looked at Little Go books with C. F. P. and then put up my pictures in the west room . . . went a walk with Katie up Montacute Hill. . . .

18th. Enjoyed my ride with Bob Chaffey; we went round by Ilchester. Went to a tea party at the G——s: met 2 frivolous parsons. Why do they not work and work earnestly? why rot away their time? Oh you reverend SHAMS! out on them vile humbugs! Went a walk with Katie and Willie round Ham Hill. I recited to them part of the Ancient Mariner as we plunged into the dark recesses of Stoke Wood. . . .

19th. Sunday. . . . Went to Father's class. Read the lessons. 'Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed but blessed are they that have not seen me and yet have believed.'

20th. Began my work—seven hours a day—it is hard to work when others play. Walked round Ham Hill with Katie and Lucy after tea. I felt annoyed about the golden crested wren's egg I broke. I spoke angrily to my dearest mother. Tomorrow I ride again. . . .

22nd. . . . Saw Bernie at the station. He will come and stay here at Montacute. *An Honest Cod.*

23rd. Went a walk early to Pit Pond with Katie. Heard the cuckoo for the first time. . . . The hills were white with frost and the bright sun shone clearly, brightening everything, kissing hill and dale. The struggle for good is hard. . . . Littleton comes home tomorrow! I long to see him again.

24th. Littleton arrived & he won't come for a walk tomorrow. . . .

26th. Went to father's class. It rained. Read the lessons in the evening. 'Beware of Dogs.'

27th. I went into Pen Mill to meet Willie but missed him. I was very glad to see him again.

28th. Mary—— came to lunch with Georgie. I like them both very much. Ha! Mary, what brown eyes you have got. . . .

30th. . . . L. C. P. has gone. I went down to see him off. Went to see Plovers meats with W. E. P. He has got mumps—blow! blast! damn!

May 1st. . . . Went a ride in the afternoon up *the* hill and through the battlefield. I enjoy riding very much, galloping furiously. Had a fine letter from G. M. C. (Carey); he is a great friend.

2nd. Went a walk with E. M. P. taking our lunch; we walked to Coker clump and all round the Hill, finishing at Brimpton. I enjoyed it very much. I seem to be getting on better with May lately. Father has heard from Fanshawe I go up to Cambridge on the 22nd of June for the Previous Exam. . . .

3rd. Stayed in all the afternoon and read about riding. Read the lessons. . . .

7th. Walked up the Park with Katie at 7.30 a.m. The sun was shining, the doves cooing in the green elms, the cuckoo playing with the echoes, the cows feeding knee deep in the rich Somersetshire pasture. Marked out the tennis court with May. . . .

9th. Went a most enjoyable ride with Katie at my side, over *the* hill, round Ham. I met two 'Peter Bells' on *the* hill looking as happy as the day is long. The sun was quite warm, the butterflies flew round, all was happy. Saw blue eyes in Bishopton.

10th. Went to church, but she was not there. In the evening I saw her on the Stoke road, her long hair lit up by the evening light. . . .

12th. Went down to the post, but did not see W—— nor was I chear'd by the sight of the long haired lass. Went into Yeovil with May and chose my Norfolk suit.

13th. Went for a ride round by Thorn Cross; met two motor bikes. In the evening went a walk with Katie and saw W——; also met Fair Hair up Batemoor.

14th. May had a postcard from Bernie. . . . Went a walk to 'Rider Haggard's Leap' all alone. The sun shone down on me, as I sat on the edge of the precipice surrounded by wild rock-bred jackdaws (sketch). . . .

18th. A lovely day! played tennis in flannels—was very bad—beaten by May. Went to a Bible Society meeting.

19th. O God! what a glorious morning. I cut my finger while cutting the grass—it did hurt. Played tennis.

20th. Cut the grass by the tennis lawn, saw old Rogers, and went a delightful walk with Willie up Ham Hill—looked for jackdaws. Mother very tired. . . .

22nd. Went with May to a beastly teachers' meeting. Played tennis—went a walk with father.

24th. Saw Fair Hair at church—read the lessons. . . .

30th. Saw Willie off. Played tennis at Montacute House.

31st. Whitsunday. 'They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.' Saw fair hair. . . .

CHAPTER FOUR

Cambridge and After

THE diary ends on 1st June, 1903, three weeks before he was due to sit for his 'Little Go' at Cambridge. Though his father kept him diligently at work at Montacute, denying his appeals for week-ends with Theodore and Bertie, he 'bossed my bloody exam,' as he informed Bertie when dolorously assuring him of the futility of asking their father to allow him to stay with Bertie in London. In October he was escorted by his father to Corpus, the college where he had been preceded, not only by his father and his brothers John and Littleton, but by both his paternal and maternal grandfathers. He was allotted the same spacious panelled room, 'larger than any room at home,' as John had occupied a dozen years before, for he discovered the inscription on one of the beams, 'Pray for the Soul of John Cowper Powys.'

Looking back on 'my three riotous years at Cambridge,' Llewelyn felt, like countless others before and since, that he wasted his time. University life, with its novel freedom from school discipline, its traditions of glad gaiety and reckless exploits, its facilities for such free social intercourse with contemporaries, measuring, liking or disliking each man on his merits, as can never again happen after the habits of designing ambition have taught the stratagems of sycophancy and dissimulation, afforded a lush pasture for Llewelyn's buoyant ardour. His eager insouciance and spontaneous charm, his 'air of woodland simplicity and artlessness,' insured his popularity with youth seeking only good companionship and conversation. 'His smile alone, with its broad sudden light,' as Louis Wilkinson has described in *Swan's Milk* and *Welsh Ambassadors* * was 'enough to win the stoniest heart.'

With his crisp curly bright hair and fair complexion, he had a sunlike look; he was dazzlingly bright. He had light eyes, eager and easily troubled, a rich unguarded mouth, a child's soft mouth greedy of pleasure and sometimes sulky. His

* Mr. Wilkinson published his first novel, *The Puppets' Dallying*, while still at Cambridge, under the name of Louis Marlow. His next two novels, *The Buffoon* (1916) and *A Chaste Man* (1917), were published under his own name. But all his later books, including *Swan's Milk* and *Welsh Ambassadors*, have appeared under the nom-de-plume of Louis Marlow.

body was hard and slight, with a hint of frailness, though no one would then have anticipated that he was so soon to be consumptive. His unusually large head seemed larger than it was because of its stiff woolly growth of light gold curls.

Before the end of his first term Llewelyn began his life-long friendship with Louis Wilkinson, then in his second year at St. John's. When Theodore was so unhappy at the Sherborne 'Prep.' that his parents decided to send him to a small school where he would have more individual attention and less exposure to ebullient boys, Mrs. Powys remembered that a friend of her girlhood had married Dr. Wilkinson, who had a private school at Aldeburgh in Suffolk. Born in 1881, their son Louis was too young to be Theodore's friend at school; he sought him out and stayed at his Sweffling farm only after a chance meeting with John had made him feel the fascination of his genius. By that time, while still a boy at Radley, he had established a correspondence with Oscar Wilde. Already a rebel against convention, he had written to Wilde, 'I cannot but think of your cruel and unjust fate whenever I pass through Reading on my way to Radley,' and Wilde told Robert Ross that this boy was the first stranger to write to him sympathetically after his imprisonment.

From Radley he went up to Oxford where he spent four terms 'investigating the claims of Christianity.' His researches, including friendly intercourse with Stuckey Coles, the head of Pusey House, were conscientious and sincere, but resulted in rejection of conventional dogma and in allegiance to atheism. Already unpopular from being, as Frank Harris said, a 'ringleader' of revolt against 'the undergraduate athletic oligarchy,' he and three of his friends were indicted for blasphemy after celebrating a 'mock mass,' and sent down by the college authorities. Much publicity followed, for their case was taken up by *Truth*, a paper wielding wide popular influence through the personality of its crusading proprietor Labouchere, and when St. John's commendably declined to be intimidated by his Oxford reputation, Louis Wilkinson entered Cambridge with the prestige of notoriety and the advantage of two years' seniority over his university contemporaries.

Knowing Llewelyn's religious uncertainty, John and Theodore had naturally avoided the responsibility of introducing him to this avowed atheist, whom Theodore, doubtless on account of his fall from grace, called 'the Archangel,' and whose reputation with orthodox authority equalled in odium that of Shelley some ninety years earlier. As naturally, Llewelyn, with his inveterate suspicions of the

conventional, lost no time in seeking his acquaintance. 'I went to take tea with him in his rooms at John's,' he wrote in *Earth Memories*:

Ralph Straus was there and I spoke so freely, so extravagantly, so blasphemously that Louis Wilkinson, I remember, got up and 'sporting his oak' lest some eaves-dropper should cause him to be cast out of Cambridge. From that first afternoon we were always together, walking and talking and jesting, intoxicated with life!

Theirs was the mutual attraction of marked contrast. Three years Llewelyn's senior, Louis Wilkinson was sophisticated and exotic, concerned with cultivating aesthetic refinements, contemptuous of athletics and public-school standards of distinction, careless of rural beauty but a connoisseur in the art of living, already a polished product of civilized culture. 'What a resplendent personage he was!' exclaimed J. C. P. 'A good deal over six feet, of a frame at once powerful and soft, his locks bronzy-gold, his nose masterful, his mouth formidable, his cheeks quick to blush a bewitching carmine, Louis . . ., full of an irresponsible and heathen zest for adventure, was certainly a startling apparition. . . .' As Llewelyn said, he had a 'graceful Aubrey Beardsley appearance;' he was attuned to the Beardsley tradition, a late flowering of the green carnation.

Llewelyn never forgot his debt to Louis Wilkinson's early influence. His 'emancipated spirit has done so much to free my mind of cant,' and, in loyally defending the indiscretions of *Welsh Ambassadors* from Littleton's strictures, he remarked, 'I owe Louis Wilkinson a very great service in clearing my mind as yet a bog of a great deal of what Montaigne used to say was *inconvenient to conversation* amongst intelligent people.' By his sympathetic appreciation and free discussion of topics conventionally forbidden, the Archangel undoubtedly lent to Llewelyn sufficient self-confidence to stand by the opinions which his reason resolved and to follow his instinct in seeking true values in life. He came as a tonic at the right time.

On his side Louis Wilkinson has confessed that Llewelyn influenced him 'at least equally.' He found ever fascinating 'his awareness, his vitality, his zest.'

Llewelyn's presence and his talk heightened all my perceptions, all my appreciations and emotions. . . . The intensification of life that Llewelyn gave me was something entirely new: all the excitements that he gave me were new ones, evoking new response.

After thirty years of unbroken friendship he found in his companionship the same fascination:

His love of the 'visible world,' a Pagan love, an Epicurean, was no less strong and sweet and rich in those days than it is now: his humour, his twists and turns and oddities, are still the same, his delight and repugnances still the same. . . . He has kept all that he had, and added to it.

Though intellectually he was more influenced by John, and he learned to admire and revere Theodore's genius above his brothers', he was always 'most at ease' with Llewelyn, and as John records, when they were together, there would be heard 'one irrepressible laughing-fit after another as if from a couple of Prep-boys.' To the end of his life Llewelyn found his spirits 'never more "gay" ' than in the company of his old Cambridge friend.

The affection between them was like that common among Crusader Knights, such as we read of in Malory, such as subsisted between young men in the seventeenth century, between Hogg and Shelley, between Cyril and George in Lawrence's *White Peacock*—a devotion deprecated by starch Victorian convention and by the fashionable reserve of public-school tradition. 'It was the kind of friendship,' said Louis Wilkinson, 'often enjoyed by men, and women too, who are not homosexual but who, possessing something of the awareness of the artist and the ardour of the poet, are drawn lovingly by the physical idiosyncracies of those of whom they are fond.' During Llewelyn's first two years at Cambridge, at the end of which Louis went down to begin lecturing in America, they were almost inseparable, sharing such long walks as Llewelyn always loved, 'as far even as Ely, talking, eating, drinking, and sometimes quarrelling.' Once, after walking twenty miles out of Cambridge, Llewelyn, protesting that as a countryman he was the better walker, proposed to walk back and declined to share the expense of hiring a trap. Knowing that he had no intention of walking, Louis would not invite him to share the trap unless he agreed to share the expense. Llewelyn loitered, hopeful of an invitation to accept a lift, till Louis ordered the man to drive off, when, promptly shedding his appearance of nonchalance, he ran after the trap, jumped in, and ruefully agreed to share the cost.

To Louis everyone but Llewelyn seemed 'irrelevant and dull,' and likewise every hour spent out of his company. He resented as a waste of time the afternoons when Llewelyn played football and 'grudged his drinking cronies at Corpus the occasional evenings when he rioted with them.' Apart from this lasting friendship and its fruits, Llewelyn gained little from Cambridge and confessed regret for having wasted his opportunities.

I spent far too much of my time hanging about tavern doors and that's the truth! What demon persuaded me to go carolling drunken ditties night after night? With such immemorial turf under my shoes, turf shining bright in the moonlight, and with such historical stones all about me, how came it that I could behave so badly?

He could not resist the lure of good-fellowship and popularity, the glee of being foremost in the riotous fun of a hectic evening and the glow of meeting next morning over reviving drinks to discuss the exploits of the previous night. He played football and tennis for the college and felt pride in prestige as a Corpus 'blood.' Those were years of rich vintage at Cambridge, with Lytton Strachey, J. C. Squire, Ralph Straus, J. M. Keynes, Hugh Walpole, Maurice Browne, and Ronald Storrs in residence. Through Louis Wilkinson Llewelyn met Straus and Squire, and wrote of the latter:

He used to sleep all the day and was only to be met with when the sun was going down; shuffling about the cloisters in slippers and peering out like an owl from a holly bush all bemused with speculations. In those days he used to feed on knowledge as an ant-bear feeds upon ants at midnight.

Twenty years later, on meeting Hugh Walpole in New York, he remembered how he had sat next to him at history lectures—Walpole of Emmanuel.

But apart from Louis Wilkinson his boon companions were the 'bloods' of his own college. At the beginning of his second year he founded a college drinking club, 'The Club of the Honest Cods.' The minute book records that 'This Club was originated and the name suggested by Llewelyn Powys of this College, November 1904.' He was the first hon. secretary, the president being a third-year man, Francis Edwin Hodder, to whose memory thirty years later he dedicated *Damnable Opinions*. When Hodder went down in the summer of 1905, Llewelyn became president with R. W. L. Oke as secretary. The number of members was unlimited, but never exceeded twelve during the two years of the club's existence. Weekly meetings were held in the rooms of members in rotation, when a bowl of punch was prepared and drunk from specially designed goblets. The punch was potent, the recipe reading:

For 10 members: take 2 lemons, grate one, add the juice of both; tablespoonful of nutmeg; 24 lumps of sugar; pour 3 half-pints of boiling water; add 2 half-pints of brandy, 2 half-pints of rum, add three-quarters of a pint of gin, two-thirds of a tumbler of port; warm by fire.

Dinners were held about twice a year; there was a memorable 'jaunt' to Newmarket, and great celebrations in March 1905 when Corpus

rose nine places in the Lent races with no fewer than five Honest Cods rowing in the successful boat. The last entry in the minute book records the forty-seventh meeting on 3rd June, 1906, when a cricket match was proposed between the Honest Cods and 'the rest of the College,' and Powys, Tabor, and Oke were deputed to make arrangements for the forthcoming dinner.

In *Earth Memories* Llewelyn mentioned two of the Honest Cods, recalling 'wild nights in the Old Court with Christopher Donaldson drinking draughts of neat whiskey and daring the devil to snatch us to hell,' and how he was observed by the dean in chapel 'as I knelt at the side of Alf Woode scribbling bawdry in my hymn-book.' Hodder remained a friend for several years and stayed at least once at Montacute; Godfrey Graburn was a neighbour of John's at Burpham in Sussex; A. G. Sauter and B. S. Tabor, both Americans, met Llewelyn later in New York; Kenneth McIntyre Kemp stayed at Montacute in 1907 and visited Llewelyn at the White Nose twenty years afterwards. The remainder faded from his life only less completely than his Sherborne friend Mylrea had faded.

While Llewelyn was at Cambridge both Littleton and Bertie married, and Willie was the only brother left at Montacute. Llewelyn developed special relationships with all his sisters. Gertrude found him the most delightful of all companions; he had the same gift as D. H. Lawrence for causing companions on a country walk to feel that they were appreciating for the first time the beauties of familiar scenes and sights. With May, his immediate senior in age, he shared the doubts and speculations of standing on the threshold of life; he was also her able assistant in organizing tennis parties, at which, as a college 'colour,' he was an object of admiration for her friends. Having become a skilled horseman under the instruction of their neighbour Bob Chaffey, he taught Katie to ride, as formerly he had taught her to ride a bicycle, with infinite pains and patience. Always he delighted in her impulsive ardour, eager responsiveness, and ready appreciation; she shared his passion for poetry and was a willing audience when he indulged his lifelong pleasure in reading poetry aloud. He would read to her while he was dressing to go out to dinner, sending her running to fetch the chosen book. 'I enjoyed reading very much, as I always do,' he wrote in his Sherborne diary, and his only academic distinction at Cambridge was the winning of a reading prize. All the Powyses possessed attractive voices, and John and Llewelyn received early training in expression from reading the

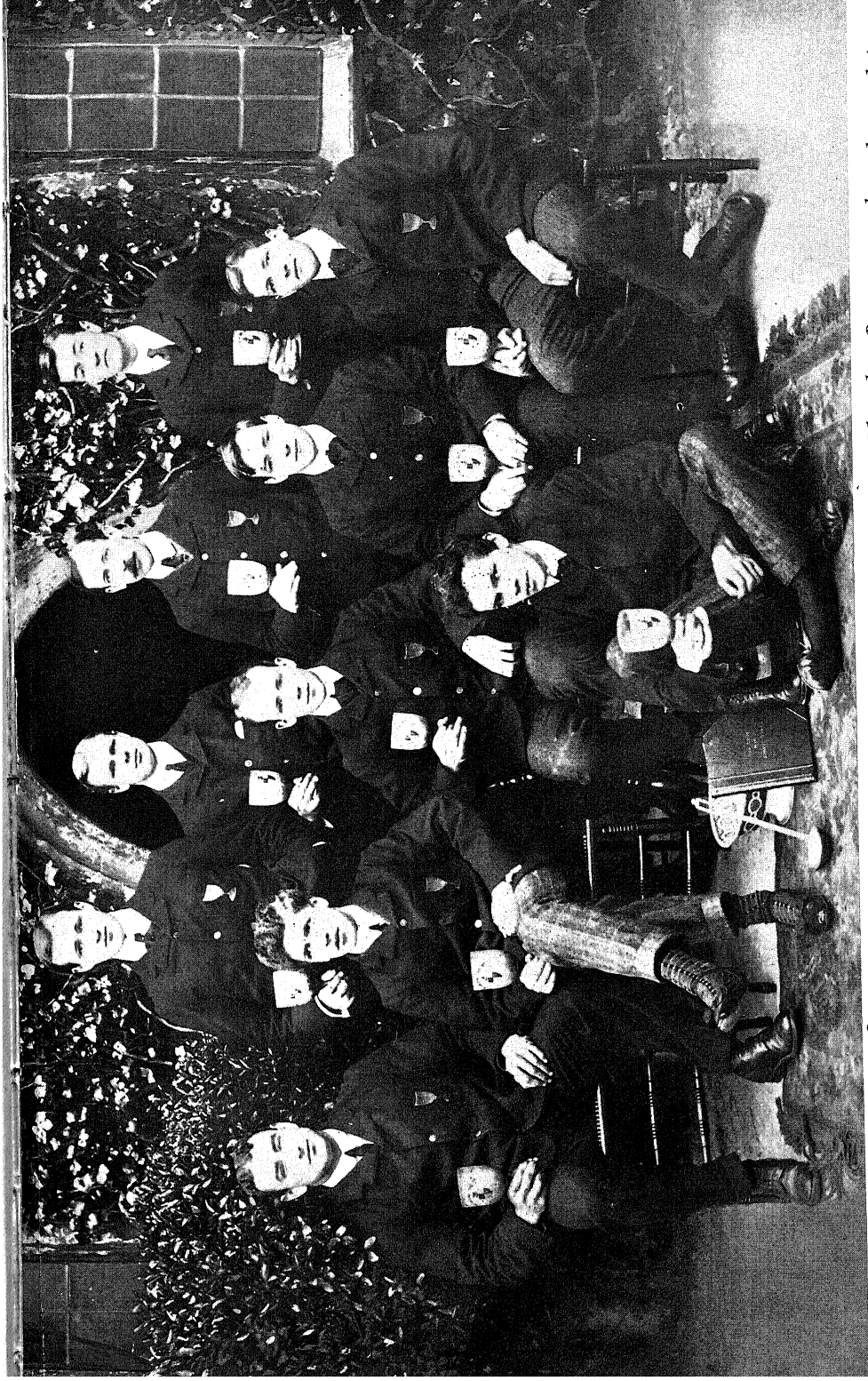
lessons in their father's church. John recalls as a rare experience listening to Llewelyn's reading from the *Oxford Book of Ballads*.

It was really like what we imagine to have been the voice of Mercutio or Romeo or Harry V. It had a sweet, leisurely, poetic, fairy-tale princeliness, rich and sweet, and I tell you the whole of the indescribable charm, beyond that of any man I've ever seen or shall ever see, of his whole personality . . . was in his voice. It was sweet and yet rugged, like the voice of a minstrel accompanying his harp even while he spoke. Of course like all the men of our family he had no music, as music, in him—but yet his voice and his reading *was* music!

In *Love and Death* he reads poetry to his imaginary heroine as in life he read to many willing listeners. With his minstrel's voice, his radiant smile, and the appearance described by Louis Wilkinson and depicted in the Honest Cods' photograph of 1905, he was the dream of a young girl's heart, and it was a major tragedy of his life that no Dittany Stone appeared in these years to sate his craving for romance and sexual experience. Among the neighbours who came to the vicarage tennis parties there was one girl to whom he was attracted and whom Louis Wilkinson has called 'Viola' in transcribing extracts from Llewelyn's diaries in *Welsh Ambassadors*. 'I am glad to say that I have overcome that dangerous infatuation,' he wrote to his sister May in March 1908, 'though it remains to be seen the effect those little brown eyes will have when seen again.'

Sussex was the county of John's adoption. After homes at Southwick and Court House, near Lewes, he moved to Burpham some time before Llewelyn went to Cambridge. There Llewelyn frequently stayed during the summer, when John was home from his winter lecture tours in America. Theodore, who moved from Studland to East Chaldon in the early summer of 1904, was close at hand and always at home. Whenever the polite society and country-house routine of Montacute palled, Llewelyn could escape to Theodore's cottage.

At this time at least, if not always, he was Theodore's favourite brother. Perseverance with the chosen life of a recluse required fortitude to resist the reproach of society. Like Mr. Quincunx in *Wood and Stone*, Theodore felt himself a pariah. Conscious that his family must regard him regretfully as a disappointment, that he must seem a drone by comparison with the busily active John, Littleton, and Bertie, he was sensitive to the slightest hint of criticism, and shrank deeper into his shell to nurse imaginary hurts. Bertie, who loved him and lost no opportunity of visiting him, had



The Club of the Honest Cods, May 1905 (F. E. Hodder, the President, centre; Llewelyn Powys seated on his right)

no thought of condemnation in his generous nature, but his brusque downrightness sometimes unintentionally wounded Theodore's vulnerable susceptibilities. In Llewelyn alone he could feel confident of no critical inclination, and he was ever warmed by his quick sympathies and inevitable high spirits. In his darker moods of depression he would declare that they had all 'no life' in them save Lulu.

Already he had begun to write, though nothing was to be published for many years except his *Interpretation of Genesis*, privately printed in 1908 at the expense of his brother John and Louis Wilkinson. Llewelyn had yet no thought of writing; he was only exultant with joy in living. His activity was tireless; Theodore could not keep up with his walking. When increase of holiday visitors decided Theodore to quit Studland 'for a quiet, peaceful, hidden-away Dorset village, where he could spend the days of his life in surroundings harmonious to the grave temper of his mind,' he and Llewelyn scoured the countryside for a suitable cottage. If Theodore desired a day's respite from walking, Llewelyn went alone. Writing of Corfe Castle in *Somerset Essays*, Llewelyn recalls these walks, and how he and Theodore were embarrassed by being accosted at Corfe by a canvassing parliamentary candidate, who singled them out for effusive attention before a gaping crowd of electors. They found more congenial such incidents as one recalled by Theodore after forty years. At a wayside inn they were astonished when a tramp ordered a quart of beer, which was more than they could have afforded. While the tramp was drinking his beer, the brothers examined the lunch they carried with them, and finding a piece of cheese too unappetizing to be eaten, they threw it into the fireplace. With the darting avidity of an animal the tramp retrieved and devoured it. He could beg food but not beer, so he kept his money for beer. With such significant observation of apparent trivialities the brothers stored their minds for use years later, Theodore in his stories, Llewelyn in his essays.

Llewelyn's tirelessness at this time hinted nothing of the disease that was to seize him. After Theodore settled at Chaldon, he would walk from Wool or Winfrith, carrying his own luggage. Alone he distempered a room of the cottage, after purchasing the materials at one of the neighbouring villages and carrying them himself over the downs. His energy and endurance suggested wiry strength in the lissome grace of his slight frame.

'I have been playing tennis for Corpus but otherwise have been at my books,' he wrote to his sister May during his last term. 'I am toiling at this exam until my heart grows faint and my brain reels.' It was one of those forlorn final bursts of feverish application following terms of carefree indulgence seemingly remote from the grim encounter with the examiners. He was 'ploughed' in the History Tripos and came down to the prospect of working in solitude at Montacute for a pass degree. But an interval of pleasure came before the weeks of concentrated work, and while he quickly wilted under depression, he ever readily responded to present enjoyment. A visit to Louis Wilkinson at Aldeburgh inspired the desire, after taking his degree, to follow John and Louis in becoming a University Extension lecturer, and he set about practising public speaking by lecturing to the adult school at Montacute. August was a 'joyful month,' with a house party of never less than twelve at the vicarage, but the dire monotony of reading for his examination depressed his spirits.

Day follows day in weary rotation—every day is as its fellow. I rise at 6.30—work till 8—breakfast—work 9-1—play croquet till lunch at 1.30. Work 2-4—walk round Ham Hill—tea 5.30—work 7-8.45—gossip for half an hour and then to bed, waking up to find another day of the same kind awaiting me.

He was haunted by 'the dismal prospect' of another failure; even if he passed, he doubted whether he would 'have scraped together moral courage enough' to accept the offer of a lecture tour in America.

He sat for the examination on 29th November, 1906, and passed with a second class in both parts. When the college dean was leading him up to receive his degree and asked what career he proposed to pursue, he had no answer. The Church was tentatively suggested; from deference to his father Llewelyn screened his scepticism, and the superficial observer, noting his pleasure in reading the lessons at church, his easily awakened conscience, and his earnestness in philosophical speculation, might have supposed that at last one of the six sons would enter his father's profession. Of course the colonies were suggested, those graveyards of hope where imperialist England has for generations buried the brains and spirits of its finest youth. He doubted his ability to succeed as a lecturer; in any case no opening in that direction immediately offered. Deciding to seek a post as private tutor, he applied to the scholastic agency of Gabbitts and Thring, and received during months of weary waiting 'those queer little blue typed notices of academic vacancies.'

I used to take these into my father's study and he used to look them over very gravely and sometimes before prayers as the family were sitting waiting for the servants to come in he would ask me if I had heard from Gabbittas that morning.

Already he was ruefully discovering that it was 'by no means an easy thing in this world to come honestly by a good pair of breeches.' So little England offered to its sons schooled according to its approved system that, by the end of February 1907, he was on the point of accepting a scholastic post in Canada.

Probably he was saved from this early exile by John's collapse on a lecture tour, resulting in his admission to the London Hospital and his first operation for gastric ulcer. Then came an invitation to interview the headmaster of a boy's preparatory school, St. Peter's Court, Broadstairs. On arrival he had lunch with the assembled school:

When table No. 3 was 'put into silence' I felt exactly the heart-sinking of a new boy at coming into contact with the arbitrariness of a discipline which sends a shiver down the spine of many grown up people even. At other tables I saw 'undermasters' carrying on conversations with the boys who sat next to them with that particular forced jocularly and superciliousness which is so noticeable to a non-academic mind—again my heart sank.

In an effort to make conversation he took from his pocket a scrap of Roman pottery he had found on Ham Hill; he thought the headmaster's interest in this influenced his selection of him for the vacant post.

On 26th April, 1907, he went to Broadstairs as an assistant master. At first he was in terror of teaching, imagining all the boys more clever than himself. His mathematics had always been weak, and at night he would steal to the class rooms to find a book 'with answers' and work out in his bedroom the sums to be done next day. French was even worse, as many boys had been abroad and spoke the language, and he plumbed the depths of humiliation when a well-intentioned 'Madame,' who came twice weekly to give lessons in French conversation, invited him to attend her classes.

A chair was placed for me at the end of the room and there I used to sit—like a great clownish dunce—while these clever children chattered to each other and to the lady. The mere possibility of being called upon to pronounce the simplest word made me literally sweat.

His deficiency so preyed on his conscience that, even when escaping for his free time, he carried that hated French grammar in his pocket.

He would take the tram to Margate or Ramsgate and temporarily

lose the depressing sense of confinement in watching the holiday crowds on the sands. Memory may have recalled these scenes when, twenty-six years later, he wrote in *Glory of Life*: 'Observe a seaside crowd, so frivolous, so sense-obsessed, and ponder upon the prodigious credulity that could claim for each gnat-cheap soul a permanent survival.' He might have discovered sexual experience, even an artificially forced bloom of romance, by courting the glances of girls on the beach, but he was deterred by instinctive caution, fortified by the habit of caste. It was sufficient recreation from the restrictive oppressiveness of the school simply to contemplate 'the manners, the comings and goings on the hot sands.' After watercress and shrimps at a quiet tea-shop he would return to dull monotony.

He was intellectually ostracized from the rest of the staff, whose conversation was confined to golf and pedagogic wit. When one of them happened to see written on the blackboard some verses of Herrick's, the common-room rang with laughter at this sample of what 'Po face' taught his form. His bitter contempt for the conventional type of sporting schoolmaster, with his account of 'ripping form' on the links and the conventional heartiness of his 'Hard cheese' when an opponent misses a putt, is concentrated in the portrait of Pareham in *Apples Be Ripe*. Though on occasion, as appears in his *Letters*, he could be pungent with expletive, he always despised colloquialisms and affectation in speech. Louis Wilkinson remarks how Llewelyn objected to the word 'hankies' and always held it against D. H. Lawrence for using it. In his last weeks of life he confessed that, though he had lived five years in the United States, he thought that the American description of the war as 'phoney' meant that everybody was using the telephone. Accustomed to discussing ideas within the circle of his family and friends, he regarded conventional small talk as a meaningless waste of time. 'When I find myself in the company of good citizens I am invariably shocked out of measure by their talk,' he wrote in *Damnable Opinions*: 'the petty preoccupations of these people are so belittling to any wide view that even the thought of death's thoroughness is remembered without displeasure.'

His engagement was only for the summer term, and back at Montacute he resumed consideration of notices from Gabbittas and Thring. His love of Montacute influenced perseverance with a distasteful profession, as a schoolmaster had longer holidays than those of any other available calling. Conscience compelled him to seek

an appointment rather than remain in idleness on his father's allowance of sixty pounds a year, but at Montacute he discarded the detested text-books and read Pater and Stevenson for pleasure. To his sister May, who had taken a teaching post in Germany and with whom he exchanged letters of feeling sympathy, he confided in September that he had 'once more settled down to these warm Montacute days and my iniquitous sedentary habits and leisurely walking.'

In November came a telegram asking him to fill an emergency at a preparatory school at Bromsgrove in Worcestershire. He arrived next day, the 22nd, at a house called 'The Steps,' where some of the masters lodged. The common-room, with pipes on the chimney piece, and rows of soiled school-books relieved by a few in obviously ornate 'birthday gift' covers, and Trollope's novels in the World's Classics edition, was similar to that described in *Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill* by Hugh Walpole, who likewise suffered a brief spell of school-mastering and tutoring after leaving Cambridge. With the exception of the headmaster, a man of some distinction, masters and boys were similar; it was a school where stupidity and lack of sympathy reacted upon the tedium of routine to produce nervous tension and unsatisfactory boys. Once, losing his temper, Llewelyn determined to cane a boy, but

when I had made all arrangements and saw his bent body covered with curiously shiny trousers I could hardly raise my hand. At that time pain suffered by any sentient being seemed awful to me.

Returning for the following term, he fell into that mood of listless resignation which, as Walpole describes, saps the vitality of many hopeful young men who drift into lifelong drudgery from want of will to break away. To his sister May he wrote at half-term:

I find on the whole I can cope with things better now; though the Egyptians in algebra and a clever youth in arithmetic have nearly extracted all the knowledge I have collected in these mysterious sciences . . . but I have learned to take the thing more calmly and even the possibility of exposure hardly ruffles the tranquillity of my mood—very different from those distracted agitated moments of St. Peter's Court. I do stay up till twelve every night—but of my own sweet will; it rather amuses me to think about the fuss I made about late hours now that I find the midnight the richest hour of the whole day.

'As often as I could,' he wrote reminiscently in one of the *Swiss Essays* on which he was working when he died, 'I would get away for long walks in the country.' Leaning one day over a gate, admiring

the line of hills in the distance across the meadows, he was told by a passing rustic that those were the Abberley Hills, where stood the home of his paternal grandmother's father, the banker Moilliet. In his loneliness he began for the first time to interest himself in wild flowers, learning in the lore of which is striking both in his writings and those of his brother John. Finding in a ditch 'a little yellow flower that was obviously neither a hawkweed nor a dandelion,' he enclosed it in his weekly letter to his mother, who replied: 'Your dear father says that the flower you have found is a very common one and that its name is coltsfoot.'

His daily walk from 'The Steps' to the school passed through a poor quarter of the town, where he witnessed 'the most appalling sights of penury and gloom . . . children so starved that they looked like apes, and once an old woman . . . with her white hair half eaten away by lice.' Remarking the smug complacency of his colleagues, who, in dapper cap and gown passed such scenes without comment, he reflected on the shortcomings of a system which tolerated such contrasting conditions. At Montacute he and his brothers, unlike most of their neighbours, had supported the Liberal candidate for South Somerset against the Tory, but now, feeling the need for more radical reform than the proposals of Asquith's Liberal government, he began to read *The Clarion*, edited by the pioneer socialist Robert Blatchford, whose views he found refreshing in candour but insipid in blatancy and bombast.

Such political opinions, his incompatibility with the other masters, and lack of interest in his work decided the headmaster to advise him to seek another post after the current term. Want of self-confidence and the growing habit of resigned endurance deterred any effort to escape from 'a horrible profession . . . with its interminable routine and ghastly duties,' and he went to interview the headmaster of a school in Yorkshire. To his sister May he wrote:

The sight of fresh blackboards and new class-rooms filled me with horrible dismay, and yet I can't get out of it; I have not got the pluck to plunge into something fresh, and you know the noble cogwheel that keeps us all on the line.

Feeling that 'on my own initiative I dare not defy this scholasticism,' he longed for the advice of his brother John, but John was not yet back from America for his summer vacation.

Fortunately his headmaster interposed timely and kindly counsel, urging him against perseverance with an unsuitable profession and to try his hand at journalism if his inclinations lay that way. On this

prompting he declined the Yorkshire appointment, resolving on 'one last great effort to get out of this horrible profession' by 'writing for the papers.' He would ask Theodore to lend him his back room and 'retire to East Chaldon, live on 15s. a week and endeavour to make a living by writing for *Home Chat*, *Pick Me Up*, *T. P.'s Weekly*, etc.: that is to say if on my return to Montacute Father more or less favours the scheme: which I am afraid is unlikely.' The proviso suggested that he might not be sorry if his father assumed the responsibility for constraining him to abandon this forlorn hope, but possibly reflecting that he might soon realize the futility of the plan, his father did not oppose it.

Before he could begin 'writing for the papers,' a letter offered him the post of private tutor to a boy of fourteen at Calne in Wiltshire. Besides being a bird in hand, it was the sort of post he had contemplated on first leaving Cambridge; the people were rich, the salary good, and 'anyway it would be a new scene and a new sensation.'

The second section of Llewelyn's contribution to *Confessions of Two Brothers* comprises 'The Diary of a Private Tutor,' relating his life at Calne from his arrival on 5th May, 1908, till his happy release on 3rd August following. From the first he was unhappy. 'The discreet ironic civility of the coachman' who met him at the station made him uncomfortably aware of his new social position. He was self-conscious under the curious scrutiny of the family at dinner. His charge was the type often mistakenly described as a 'difficult' boy—big for his age, backward, pampered by parents grown wealthy in trade, 'his narrow lips' revealing 'his spoilt ineffectual soul.' Vainly Llewelyn tried to improve his manners, to stir his imagination by reading poetry to him; he 'could have killed him' when the boy 'threw half a glass of water at a little village girl who was passing below his window and had accidentally trodden on the edge of the lawn.' Daily he felt the humiliation of his position. As the boy refused to cycle outside the grounds, Llewelyn had to ride behind him round and round the garden paths. He had to watch him fishing, to assist his sinking a pond, and to catch toads to put into it. Sometimes he derived compensations from the depths of his own nature. In digging 'a kind of smuggler's cave' he forgot his 'abasement' in the satisfaction of physical labour. When, after a picnic on the downs, there was no room for him in the car and he had to return alone on foot, he enjoyed the walk, 'with ground ivy crushed in my

hands and the sights and sounds of the countryside all about me.' He also attempted to write. He hurried away from his pupil to 'sit through the soft summer evenings in the little cottage garden reading Stevenson's works,' meditating upon 'the unexpected turns of his style to be found in *Virginibus Puerisque*, and in his volumes of travel and in his short stories.' Writing of Stevenson in *Swiss Essays*, he recalls how he sat 'hour after hour "playing the sedulous ape," while dazzled moths would beat themselves against the globe of my lamp which stood upon a table sheltered by a blanket-wound clothes-horse that served me as a wind screen.'

His brother John had been active on his behalf, and the secretary of the American University Extension Society wrote inviting him to go out for the following Easter term and lecture on English literature. After posting a letter of acceptance, he worried over having spelt 'needless' with an 'a,' till John wrote reassuringly: 'To worry about "neadless" is needless worry, for the Secretary will only think it a slip or a late English fashion!' With this provision for the future, and knowledge that the period of durance was limited, he found his situation more easily tolerable. He could enjoy playing tennis, though the family expected him to parade his prowess before tiresome vulgarians. He made a friend in the local vicar, a man 'full of zeal and enthusiasm' despite his grey hairs, and escaped in the evenings to discuss literature and religion in the vicarage garden. And the last month was brightened by flirtation with an old school-friend of his charge's sister.

On 3rd August—'free at last!'—he left Calne to join John at Burpham. 'It was now,' he wrote, 'that I fell more completely than ever under the influence of my brother J. C. P.' Louis Wilkinson has related how John, realizing the possibility of Llewelyn's failure as a lecturer, spared neither time nor trouble in coaching him. He has told how, when Llewelyn was subsequently required to lecture on Mrs. Humphry Ward, 'John addressing him and me and a stenographer, gave as eloquent, as brilliant, and as entertaining a lecture as though he had been addressing an audience of a thousand.' When the script was found to be too short, John resumed in flippant mischief:

But, ladies and gentlemen, it is, after all, not so much as a social thinker! as a novelist! as a mistress of English prose! that Mrs. Ward will be remembered. It is rather for qualities of a more personal, a much more personal, a much more intimate kind.



John Cowper Powys in his thirties

And 'he proceeded to an impassioned eulogy of those qualities, which it may be wiser to omit,' till Llewelyn, too worried to appreciate the humour, asked, 'Do you think there's enough now without that?'

From August to December at Burpham or Montacute, or travelling to John's lectures in the north of England, John and Llewelyn were rarely apart. 'Every insignificant incident of the day was experienced with relish—the few minutes out in the garden before breakfast—the lighting of cigarettes as we hurried off together afterwards.' John's rare and richly stored mind was mellowing with approaching middle-age; Llewelyn's revelled in its richness, gleaned impressions to provide fruit for solitary reflection and mature in the memory for the vintage of his essays. On their walks they often chose church yards as resting places to ruminate and talk. Rook and Lexie Ashover in *Ducdame* meet in the churchyard and sit talking on tombstones. The tranquillity and seclusion of such places admitted no distraction from thought and talk, and they would speculate on 'the old weather-beaten inscriptions on the stones,' and think 'of Hardy and Shake speare and of the still bones of the peasantry below the earth.' Under these conditions Llewelyn's nature expanded; his quick eager mind always promptly responded to ideas and poetical appreciation, and it was his responsiveness, his easy certainty in catching the drift of another's thoughts and mood, which rendered him the rarest of companions. When nothing and nobody roused him to respond, as at Broadstairs, Bromsgrove and Calne, he folded up like a flower drooping despondently before the blast of sunless winds.

On 19th December, 1908, he sailed for America with John from Liverpool. At Liverpool before leaving they spent a few days with John's friend Tom Jones, 'the Julius Caesar of the cotton markets,' described in *The Buffoon* as Tom Fielding, and like Edward Raynes and Jack Welsh, they enjoyed at least one hectic party with some of 'Tom Jones's girls.' 'These Liverpool experiences were neither love affairs nor infatuations,' writes John: 'they were, purely and simply, friendly erotic encounters between men and women.' The girls, belonging to 'the lower middle-class,' sought escape from the drabness of their daily employment in shops and offices, from the squalor of dismal homes or dingy lodgings; in return for entertainment they gave freely gay companionship, including the last favour to those they liked. The girl who fell to Llewelyn must have wondered at her luck in encountering a young man of such personal

beauty and innocent ardour. She would not have stinted herself to an older man, and was willing enough to allow John the necessary caresses for his vicarious gratification, but she went joyously to bed with his younger brother.

Probably it was not Llewelyn's first sexual experience; he may have known some such casual adventure as Chris Holbech's in *Apples Be Ripe*. But it was the first time he had slept a night with a woman, and next day, walking with John, he spoke exultantly of the possibility of his having begotten a bastard. Apparently there was no such consequence; he never saw her again, and she probably succumbed, as Tom Jones feared, to a fatal fondness for drink. But Llewelyn remembered her always gratefully; memories of her embraces were alike a solace and a sharp reminder of his lack during subsequent years of starved repression.

'I don't know that I actually learned much from America,' Llewelyn wrote of this trip. He was too engrossed by anxiety over his lectures. On arrival at New York, between lunching and dining with John or Louis Wilkinson, he read feverishly at the Drexel Library. He bought a pocket diary—one page to a week—which he carefully kept throughout the year 1909. On 5th January he noted:

Worked all day at George Eliot—terrified at lunch but grew gradually cooled. Set out for Holmesburg in the rain and mud. Drank ginger ale and ate bread. My début not a failure, but not a great success.

On the 8th Louis Wilkinson accompanied him to his first lecture in New York, which he described to his mother as 'more or less a fiasco.' 'Deliriously, with parched mouth and woolly head,' he 'swayed to and fro before an amused audience.' One disgusted New Yorker, loudly advising him to 'take the first boat back to England,' asked, 'Is this what we pay five thousand dollars for?' But an enthusiastic Scot was 'very kind, said he would attend the whole course,' and duly did so, 'sitting in the front row and eagerly listening to every word.' His failure was due to indecision on a definite plan of delivery; for safety's sake he carried a complete script of the lecture, but instead of being content to read it, he tried to imitate John's manner of declamation and digression, and faltering, for want of brief notes for reference, had to keep looking for his place in the script. He was 'in evident agony,' and Louis Wilkinson declares that 'listening to it was one of the most acutely embarrassing and distressing experiences I have ever had.' Afterwards he was in abject

misery and despair, exaggerating 'fantastically and beyond all measure' his failure, and forboding gloomily about his future. On the Sunday he 'walked with Jack and Louis along a straight grey road—everyone tired, everyone despondent.'

Deciding to read from his script, he lectured more successfully, though some listeners rudely asked if he had 'come from England to read to us.' He told his mother buoyantly that each lecture proved 'better than the last,' but the barometer of his spirits, as always, was regulated by the pleasure in personal contacts. He met his old Cambridge friends, Sauter and Tabor, and 'crouched drunk under a public urinal' after an evening spent according to the Honest Cods' tradition. Two nights later he 'feasted with Tabor on champagne and oysters.' He usually recorded that a lecture 'went off fairly well' if he had been in the company of John and Louis. With Louis he relished their old Cambridge intimacy, and on 5th February 'we spent a humorously quarrelsome day and humorously quarrelsome night.' One Sunday brought a characteristic entry in the diary: 'Walked with Jack and Louis—had a splendid evening, only I sulked at the end of it, because I did not know who Patti was.' Such momentary fits of sulks, when his 'woman's mouth' would purse in petulance, endeared him to his friends the more because his sense of humour quickly recognized his own absurdity and set him laughing with them at himself.

John's health was a constant source of worry to him, as he was still afflicted by the gastric trouble for which he had undergone an operation eighteen months before. 'Jack raged and stormed about a bowl of cream which I tried to stop him swallowing like the greedy gut he is,' and when John returned to New York from a lecture trip ill and depressed, Llewelyn declared 'my lecture on Hawthorne a dreadful failure.' On 23rd February, after lecturing in the afternoon on Wordsworth 'with only moderate success' but 'better' on Dickens in the evening, he walked back to his lodgings in the rain and caught a bad cold.

Had a nightmare night and woke in a suicidal mood. However Jack's sudden appearance comforted me. Went to meet Emily [their old nurse, then living in New York] but she did not come, so got back to bed. Another bad night. I am resigned, even to death. It is funny, as Jack and I thought, that we make such a fuss about each other's deaths, when we all are bound to die in 75 years or so. Jack promises to carry my ashes to England in a wonderful silver jar; but unfortunately, as has happened before, I have been too hasty in my anticipation—I recover. I have eaten plenty of porridge and cream and am likely to live a long time yet.

In March he felt his lectures were 'fairly successful,' and he was pleased when Atkins, the University Extension secretary, remarked that he had 'the three I's,—information, illumination, inspiration.' But the compliment was apparently a cushion to break his impending fall, for the following week the diary records, 'Atkins is going to cut me down in money.' Hence his next lecture—on Shelley—was 'rather a failure.' On 23rd March, having delivered his last lecture, he wrote: 'Finished in Glory—Free.'

The three months of continuous nervous strain was ended. He had worked hard, reading feverishly in libraries to prepare his lectures and indulging only in occasional dinners with friends after lectures. But the worry, the feeling of being on probation, the ceaseless fear of failure, took greater toll from his physical resources than the work. John had spared no exhortation to effort for success, and afterwards, attributing the inception of Llewelyn's illness to the strain of this tour, he blamed himself that 'I did not look after my younger brother or take care of him on that first visit as I ought to have done.' Louis Wilkinson also believed that 'the effort and great nerve-strain' of his lectures, following the long weeks of writing and reading during the previous autumn in the dark, damp 'schoolroom' at Montacute Vicarage, might have developed his tubercular tendency. But it is likely that, if, as Llewelyn himself declared, his whooping-cough in 1899 bequeathed a weakness of the chest, the stress of the lectures was only the culmination of accumulated aggravations. Every winter he never long escaped one heavy cold after another, and his habit, reprobated by Louis Wilkinson, of muffling himself up, and sleeping with windows too little open under a weight of blankets, was probably an intended precaution against such colds.

Before returning to England with John, he had a fortnight's freedom. He spent two days at Atlantic City with John; there was a visit to Valley Forge, when they 'lay on the hillside, listening to the harsh croaking of the crows and looking far down at the blue waters of the Schuylkill below'; he found time for casual flirtation; there was an evening when he 'got drunk and kissed Twinkles.' Crossing the Atlantic in the 'Kaiser,' he flirted ardently with a German girl, with whom he corresponded for some time. On 12th April he 'saw the "Kaiser" steam away with Senta, saw the boat train steam away with Jack, and found myself in the evening at Taunton and at night at Montacute.'

Bertie had contrived to be at home to welcome him, and the two

brothers spent the next four days in long country walks with tea in the back-rooms of rustic inns. Bertie stole Llewelyn's diary for two days and noted indulgently Llewelyn's ardent welcome from his sister Katie, who was staying with Theodore; both brothers were amused by Theodore's remark as they awaited a train at Yeovil, 'The whole of life is waiting: we may as well wait here as anywhere.' On the Saturday Bertie and Llewelyn went a ramble with their father; on the Sunday Llewelyn 'sat in church again' and was moved to speculation on the improbabilities of Christian faith. Then, with Bertie gone, he divided his time among the others of the family with the impartiality that endeared him to all: he walked one day with Lucy in the woods, another with May under the new moon, attended Gertrude's bazaar, and walked with Willie to Tintinhull. He went one day to Bridport to walk by the sea; he lectured on America to the men's club at Montacute; to relieve his father he sat by the bedside of a dying boy—'cough, cough, cough; howl, howl, howl, howl,'—and with the wind beating rain on the panes, he reflected how 'in our last days flowers alone minister unto us.'

When Littleton came for a few days, his future was discussed. Their cousin Ralph Shirley, who had a controlling interest in the publishing house of William Rider and Son, offered Llewelyn the post of junior director; it was an offer with excellent prospects, but some capital had to be invested and Llewelyn shrank from the daily routine of office hours. Littleton, now headmaster of the Sherborne 'Prep.,' had a vacancy for an assistant master. It was still possible that Atkins would re-engage him for another winter in America, and though he himself had characteristically less faith than anybody in this possibility, Llewelyn seems to have urged it as an excuse for his hesitancy over the choice between re-entering the 'hated profession' and the even more irksome bondage of office routine. Littleton had a friend who would take duty for the second half of the summer term; if Llewelyn came for the first half, the vacancy could be left open till the autumn. Though it meant an immediate return to teaching, the compromise deferred a final decision; there was still hope of escape. 'So that brings the matter to an end,' said Mr. Powys, closing the final discussion on the evening of 3rd May. On the 5th Llewelyn went to Sherborne.

He suffered no such agonies as at Broadstairs and Bromsgrove. He loved Littleton and strove loyally to assist him in the work to which he was devoted; he loved Sherborne, its lake, its ancient

abbey, the beloved scenes of his boyhood. His diary shows that he was able to maintain a reflective detachment while pursuing the daily duties.

Sun. May 9.—The Abbey Bells. Trent churchyard, 3 p.m. Humanity has ever searched and still is searching for a plausible explanation for existence. You take it and yourselves too seriously the trees & sunshine seemed to say. The dead men below spoke to me of the privilege of being above ground, & I was led into the green garden of Eleanor, Ruth & Cecily. On my way home I passed through cool lands, beneath green trees & by the side of warm banks, the Abbey bells ringing before me & the sun shining behind. 'We are like turkeys driven with a stick & red clout to market.'

11.—Yeovil—the dentist. Sat & talked with the dying boy. My health seemed an insult. I left the house and walked away strangely indifferent to his fate. He has fallen but I go on.

12.—Canon Lyon, blind & old, lies still in his bed; through the open window came the shouts of children—far away can be seen the cemetery and the Dorset woods.

13.—Walk with boys through the Honeycombe Woods. . . .

14.—Watch the boys play cricket—listen to their voices from my study & write to Mother & Katie.

15.—Eat an ice cream, umpired at cricket, and played tennis with a woman.

16.—Swinburne is dead & yet the thrushes play jets of wild music over everything. Still doth Dolores like Catullus cover with red, red roses lover after lover. And yet the most unhappy slave—ah me!—the sun still shines on hath the laugh of thee. Theology for the Indian of parts—how I hate these Sunday women. The potency of Christianity lies not in the resurrection (still less in the ascension) but in the crucifixion. 'Sound the fife & cry the Slogan.'

17.—Played tennis with Tom—the sun shone over the girls' school.

18.—Read Jack's poem to Stradling over an ice cream at Ford's—then again to Mrs. Curran over a cup of tea at the Bellamies. Saw the sun go down in red and purple in honour of the astral intellect of George Meredith.

19.—Was up early in the morning rolling the cricket ground—sunshine & lilac, lilac & sunshine, & we insecure adhesions fixed momentarily amid the unfathomable.

20.—Umpired. The birth and death of Jesus we can understand, the resurrection one can swallow *cum grano sale*, but when it comes to the Ascension—really St. Paul & Mr. Selwyn expect too much from the credulity of mortal man.

22.—Cricket—vivat T. H.—the misty valley. Won £1 10s. from Straddles . . . played vingt-et-un late into the night.

23.—Sherborne in the early morning. The first cuckoo broke the repose of the Abbey, as the black dog emerged from the yew tree shadows. The restlessness of man contrasts unfavourably with the immemorial dignity of the startling stillness of ancient buildings, watching imperturbably the passing away of time. Talked with Gaffer Wood on the lawn in his garden and dine with my colleagues.

25.—Listened to the cuckoo with the boys, as he cried through the vexed trees & over the cow's parsley by Coombe farm. . . .

30.—Walked into Yeovil & sang a peroration to the twelve apostles in Pennill Adult School. John Tavender thought that God Almighty had not much to do with

the Boer War—Judas Iscariot applauded. On the way home I rested by a yellow field, whose buttercups had been crushed in the early morning by the cloven feet of the great god Pan. The moon behind the clouds.

31.—Read Thomas Hardy as the evening sun lit up the playground yard. . . .

. . . June 3.—Worked at my work.

4.—Stayed in the whole day working at the library.

5.—Motored with the Kimbers to Milton Abbas—stuck at Bulbarrow—the lady in blue. Remembered going walk with Bertie. Rushed home through Blackmoor Vale, passed green cottages and little children, & men & women with their evening salutations.

6.—Walked with Tom & Kimber down the Lillington lane and by the side of stagnant ponds. I shall serve Tom forever. In the evening listened to Canon Westcott, that holy man, explaining away the difficulties of the co-eternals. The Sherborne chapel, fixed on the surface of the earth, dancing in the sun like a tumbler pigeon, and behind in the remote distance the Father, the Son & the Holy Ghost.

7.—Received a letter from Ralph. 'Do not be irresolute. Make up your mind to come to me—otherwise you will spoil your life.' Busied myself with books all the evening. . . .

10.— . . . looked over the valley towards Camelot & told the boys of King Arthur and his Knights. Also we found a fox's hole, and thought of his return in the early morning—the weird glow of early dawn & the strange sound of his barking.

11.—In the Trent Valley alone. Willie arrives. Watched cricket with Willie.

12.—Got up early and walked through the park to a dilapidated church tower. Below us lay the bones of the Collis family, above grew the rank churchyard grass. Room comes, and we walk together to the Slopes—from the shadow of the trees look upon the lights. . . .'

On Thursday, 24th June he wrote, 'Finished in Glory—Free,' and next day left Sherborne for Devon with Willie. They 'walked over Dunkery & down by Badgworthy Water,' and had supper at Jan Ridd's farm where he had been years before with Littleton. On Saturday they joined Bertie who was staying near Lynton. In the next three days they made their way to South Devon, walking over the moor to Bovey Tracey where John's brother-in-law, Harry Lyon, had a house called Middlecot. But Llewelyn immediately resigned his holiday on hearing that John was ill in London. 'Trembled at life terrific,' he wrote. 'Let me die—he belongs to the earth and has no soul.' Pausing at Sherborne to see Littleton, he travelled to London, saw John in a nursing home, and dined with Ralph Shirley.

John was 'profoundly struck by his look of concern.'

'How well I have come to know that disturbance in his rugged and sensitive countenance, contorting its features, even as a sweet waterspring disarranges the rubble of a mountain rock! Over his own illness—when it fell upon him—his face

would cloud and grow grave; but it never *contracted* with quite the same spasm of concern as over this collapse of mine. Llewelyn's attachment to me remains a source of continued wonder to my mind. Littleton's I understand, for it is like mine for him; but Llewelyn's has something else in it, like a trouble in the Sun at some chasm appearing in the rondure of the Moon.'

John was very ill; he was also worried over the possibility of being compelled by ill-health to abandon his lecturing, on which depended support for his wife and child. It was a favourite pose to profess that he had no heart. Hence it seemed to Llewelyn at this time that his devotion was little reciprocated. 'Because I love Jack, I do not ask that Jack should love me in return,' he wrote in his diary. He even saw humour in his determined devotion, for reflecting on his emotions, he defined 'amativeness' as the 'love of Lulu' for the Liverpool girl, 'adhesiveness' as 'the love of Lulu for Jack.' After Llewelyn's death John denied that he was sensitive as he himself was sensitive, declaring that his character was 'massive and tough.' And now Llewelyn hardened himself against any hints that his attentions were unwelcome; he took charge of John with decisive singleness of purpose, of which he had so far shown little in directing the course of his own life.

On 2nd July he retrieved John from the nursing home and escorted him to Sidmouth where their parents were on holiday, determined to enlist their influence to persuade John to give up lecturing.

July 3.—I shall free Jack. Walked with Mother and then with Father. Revealed my misgivings, and was bound in sympathy with the original granite of the old primary progenitor. Walked in the moonlight with Jack by the sea shore.

4.—Worked on the *Keats* & everything seemed going well. . . . Jack tossed in pain all through the night. He must not lecture again, but can I stop him—and have I gone too far? Upon the ridge of arid sand & gravel I lay supine, half dead, & heard the bells chime 2.

5.—Started for Torquay. Jack rested on me for many hours. Came home lying in the stern of the boat, on one side of me a sick brother, on the other a menstruous woman.

6.—The dark cloud of depression lifts. Jack is better—God I pray! Walked with Jack and Mother.

Writing that he was 'acting as private secretary and nurse to Jack,' he asked Louis Wilkinson if he would take over John's autumn lecturing engagements and if he could find openings where John 'could at once make some money by writing light literature for the papers.' On Friday, 9th July, he accompanied John to London to see a specialist, who advised him to give up the strain of lecturing. 'Jack

is free—*Finished in Glory*,' wrote Llewelyn jubilantly, and returned with John to his home at Burpham, where he spent the week entertaining John's American friend, Robert Bright, copying out John's book on Keats and some short stories, playing in the garden with John's small son, and anxiously watching over John's health.

Feeling that John required only rest to recover, he went up to London on 19th July, spending a night with Bernie O'Neill and another 'on the flip-flap' with an old Cambridge friend before travelling to Aldeburgh to stay with Louis Wilkinson. There he was impressed by 'a faded Georgian beauty' and by sitting beside 'the little quivering fluttering white body' of a girl with whom he flirted mildly. Together he and Louis enjoyed long walks and many of their 'laughing fits.' On Saturday, 24th July, the diary records, 'On this day Harebells were ravished,' referring to the incident recalled after nearly twenty years in *Apples Be Ripe*:

Raymond looked at the harebells. 'When I see something beautiful I want to ravish it,' he said, and in a moment he had stretched himself out upon the flowers. It was an incident that troubled his companion. . . . Was there a danger in thus snatching at the immaculate in life, at the ineffable essence that was for ever present and not present and perhaps, who knew, most present when farthest from one?

Often he pondered this problem. When he lay ill in his last years, with little hope of ravishing fresh emotions, he wrote of it in *Glory of Life* and *Damnable Opinions*, and was then convinced only that the sorriest sin against life was a shrinking from self-fulfilment.

Returning from Aldeburgh, after two nights in London with Bertie, he arrived at Burpham to find John resolved, after all, to resume his lecturing.

Jack will go to America. Women decay in misery, little children are dragged into lustful bondage, but it is still most unwise to take the world too seriously.

Thus accepting defeat of his hopes for John, he continued to serve him, copying out two stories, *Romer Mowl* and *The Spot on the Wall*, and dispatching them to magazines, besides writing his letters. He spent two days at Brighton in Bank Holiday week with Ralph Shirley and Bernie O'Neill, walking back alone to Burpham after a bathe before breakfast. On 11th August he accompanied John to Montacute. 'I shall cultivate the art of loving,' he wrote in his diary: 'Once again everything is at Montacute as it was before.' Littleton was there, and Willie, and his sisters; Louis Wilkinson and Bernie O'Neill came to stay the following week.

Still resolved 'never to take this world over seriously,' he resorted to bantering John about his reasons for continuing to lecture. John submitted to teasing and rebuke from Llewelyn alone, but he could not bear that Llewelyn should be sympathetically allied with another of their brothers in baiting him. So, as he tells in the *Autobiography*, he lost his temper when Llewelyn was teasing him to the vast amusement of their brother Willie, exclaiming, 'Young man, I'll never forgive you for this!' According to Llewelyn's diary, the incident occurred on the evening of Sunday, 15th August, 1909. John soon forgot his spleen, for next morning Llewelyn read letters with him before they walked together 'slowly over Ham Hill.' A few days later they walked to Tintinhull, their favourite resort, and 'lay back on two tombstones talking,' deciding that 'there is no such thing as good and evil—everything is relative—and each situation must be dealt with differently. Discretion is to be the watchword.'

There was a Saturday excursion to Weymouth, where Llewelyn sat on the beach with John, Theodore, Willie, Louis Wilkinson, and Bernie O'Neill, before returning to East Chaldon for the week-end. There he 'apprehended the profound gloom of Theodore's nature as I saw him standing by his baby's supper, a forlorn and shredded figure.' And one night:

Three figures stalked over Egdon Heath, with the moon high above them, and ugly apprehension deep in their hearts. Stood with Bernie on the threshold of Bethcar and looked into the night as the Lord God raised his golden thumb over the West Chaldon heights.

Subsequent events reminded Dr. O'Neill of how, observing the moon, 'a yellow crescent with jagged horns,' Llewelyn remarked, 'You see that? It is God's claw and it will do me evil. I feel that it is a sign of harm to me.'

It was such an August as Llewelyn had known and loved for years at Montacute, with the few chosen friends coming to stay, tennis parties with their sisters' friends, and long walks into the country with good talk and laughter. That life's cup should thus be brimming for a few brief weeks each year roused resentment against the social system which condemned all of them to spend the major part of their lives in 'earning a living.'

Only Willie remained when Llewelyn left on 1st September to stay a week at Shirley in Derbyshire, where the Rev. William Richardson Linton had succeeded Mr. Powys as vicar. Mr. Linton had married Ralph Shirley's sister Alice; their daughter Marion, to

whom Llewelyn was later to become engaged to be married, was about six years his junior. But though he records a walk with Marion Linton 'by Bowbridge wishing well,' it was a lively friend of hers who monopolized his attention during this visit. He was 'mightily pleased' at 'holding her hand and sitting so close that I almost felt the quiver of her white body through her pink frock,' and before he left, they kept a secret tryst in the flower garden, where he kissed her 'many many times' and received a flower as a love token. Passing through London on his way home, he 'saw Angela again and was a slave to the "grand passion."' Travelling homeward in the train, he 'was conscious of a peculiar sensation, an indescribable longing—I looked at my yellow daisy and knew its origin.' At twenty-five, being in no position to marry, he was condemned by the conventions of his caste to the necessitous celibacy of an octogenarian.

He was still in correspondence with Atkins but no offer of another lecture tour had yet arrived. So, after a few days at Montacute walking with Gertrude or Willie, he returned to Sherborne. Intending this time to settle, he furnished his own rooms at Richmond Villa. 'The immediate surroundings of a man have a vast influence,' he noted: 'In times of spiritual peril we are saved or damned by the unspoken words of a picture, a photograph, a book or grotesque ornament.' Accordingly, because of impatience with his mother's philosophy of resignation, he one day 'took Mother's photograph out of its frame and hid it in a drawer, putting Thomas Hardy in its place; then being troubled by its pathetic pleading look, I replaced it.'

Bertie came for a week-end, and after attending school chapel with him and reading to him John's story of *Romer Mowl* over the study fire, he sensed again the happy atmosphere of their school days. 'Everything seemed to me to be the same,' he wrote. 'Am I privileged really to enjoy once again those happy far off days? I had imagined them to have gone like the rest.' Though he felt scant sympathy with his 'colleagues' and sardonically remarked 'how ill at ease most masters seemed when confronted by the passions,' he was content in his environment, confident of ability to preserve his detachment. 'Though a schoolmaster I am still a Bohemian,' he noted with satisfaction when, after taking 'prep' and dining with the masters, he had hurried back to sit with a book by his own fireside. A general election was in progress, and he told his mother how he and Littleton sat at opposite ends of the luncheon table, each ex-

plaining to the boys 'the political situation from our own particular standpoint, which is rather comic.' Occasionally reminded by sharp pangs of his celibacy and conscious that life was passing him by, he 'grew rather tired of it all, not of schoolmastering, but of the petty atmosphere.'

The beauties of nature always restored his joy in living, as when he 'looked up at the stars and communed with thoughtful night' or 'woke up with the sun streaming in at my window' and saw 'there had been a frost—the first of the year.' No hint of disaster occurred to his mind; he had not even yet contracted one of his usual winter colds.

Oct. 30.—Scaled the hill and looked down upon Osborne. Stood on the Bristol road by the turnpike house—there was laughter and firelight within. Suddenly as I neared Sherborne the full moon rose, with a message on its lewd countenance which I very well understood.

31.—'The human race is without the pale of the grand scheme, a forgotten and neglected offspring of prolific nature.' Walked gaily down Cheap Street with this secret in my bosom. All around me were lights and bright faces, and on my right a Tess sold milk behind a counter. It rained: I heard or thought I heard the tapping of a willow wand on my door. It was all hallow e'en. Listened to a sermon by Bensley.

Nov. 1.—Read Nietzsche. The will to power. God is disproved but why despair?

2.—Played football with the boys. In the evening Will Johnson came to visit me.

Then in bolder handwriting on Wednesday, 3rd November:

There is blood in my mouth. That drop of blood is my death warrant; I must die.

In compiling 'A Consumptive's Diary' for *Confessions of Two Brothers* he checked the exact quotation from Keats; he expanded selected extracts and often altered dates. The original diary—written continuously, so that dates of entries are often difficult to identify—was faithfully transcribed, with slight omissions, by Louis Wilkinson in *Welsh Ambassadors*. During the next three days the diary proceeds:

Went down to the Gym—more blood. I also felt a devilish pang. Lectured to the boys. Quoth the Raven *Never More*—more blood. Told Littleton & went to the Doctor. Listened to a concert, and observed a fragile and exquisite profile behind bright Red leaves. More blood. See the Doctor at 12.45. 'You would like me to be Honest. There is no time to be lost—you have consumption.' Went to bed spitting out blood and blasphemies.

His bedroom windows were removed from their frames; the rain beat in upon the bare floor. On Saturday the 6th his father came.

I cried because Tom cried: Father prayed—and I looked far away at the Honeycombe woods. The afternoon was very still. I saw Father's bowed head and my own hands transparent as I lay coughing in bed, & I thought myself dying. At first I grew alarmed (May said she saw 'the fear of death in my eyes') but afterwards quite resigned. I have lived twenty-five years; and can cry 'vixi'—there is no sensation unknown to me—I have experienced everything, and shall be found ready. I am at rest about Heaven—I shall die 'brimful of goodness'—with no remorse & no regrets, only a little piqued by God's impatience.

In *Skin for Skin*, and more briefly in 'A Struggle for Life' in *Earth Memories*, he tells how 'in every possible way I dramatized my situation.' He was always imaginatively alive to the dramatic possibilities of any situation, but circumstances excited his attitude in this case. Louis Wilkinson at first declined to believe the news of his illness, thinking he intended a joke to see how his friend would be affected by his impending death; his family seemed almost resigned to the inevitability of his doom; his parents, with their simple Christian faith, accepted the tragedy as God's will. Llewelyn resented their resignation. 'I liked to talk about dying, but I had no mind to die,' he wrote. 'I liked to rail against God, but I had no mind that He should hear me.'

He found an ally in John. 'Not Lulu, not Lulu ill,' cried John in anguish, and Llewelyn exultantly realized that John loved him as he loved John, though, with cynical humour, noting that 'Jack shows that he, like me, can love fiercely & selfishly,' he attributed his distress to fear of losing his faithful adherent: 'Jack's golden book is to be snatched from him.' John stayed only one night before hurrying to Montacute to urge Llewelyn's plea that an effort should be made to defeat 'God's will' by sending him to Switzerland. As he wrote to Louis Wilkinson, his mother's feeling amounted almost to 'so passionate and fierce a desire to have Lulu to herself that she'd sooner he'd die under her care than live in Switzerland,' while their father at first accused the doctors of exploiting the situation for professional profit. But his eloquence prevailed. 'Jack goes to Montacute with the letter,' wrote Llewelyn: 'Father bends his will.'

John was only one day away before returning to Llewelyn's bedside. 'He would enter my room very early, before it was light, and we would discourse at large, I in a whisper, so as not to injure my lungs.' So he recorded in *Skin for Skin*. In the diary he added: 'At last I find someone who loves as I do—Curse!' He felt that the revelation of his eldest brother's love had come too late. When Louis Wilkinson came, they laughed and talked as usual. When Theodore

came, Llewelyn felt that 'he loves me more than I had thought,' though he observed with amusement that 'his chief preoccupation seemed to be lest he himself should catch my complaint. He sat by the open window, inhaling the fresh air, and now and again drawing in his cheeks, as he uttered a thousand whimsical and fantastical observations.'

As he remarked in the *Confessions*, 'my illness had sharpened my wits.' He missed nothing, storing every impression, since his time for entertainment might so soon be cut short. With intent to impress by self-dramatization, he sometimes exploded in spleen. When he was well enough to walk out and John made some remark in raillery, he asked hotly, 'You don't feel as though you were falling to pieces, do you?' But he always regarded himself with critical humour, and noted of this incident in his diary: 'I unjustly reproach Jack.' As Louis Wilkinson has written, 'His consumption is important; for, heightening his sense of life's value, the disease, from its onset to the present year (1935), has quickened and intensified all his perceptions.'

On Sunday, 5th December, less than a week after he was able to leave his bed, he 'walked with Jack & Tom along the Yeovil road.' Next day he left Sherborne with John for London, where they dined merrily with Bernie O'Neill and his wife and Ralph Shirley. On Tuesday at Dover he 'drank heavily, mighty pleased pro tem,' and 'crowed like a cock' at finding his temperature normal. The excitement of his first continental trip sustained his spirits; weak as he was, at Laon 'muffled up against the night air, and dizzy with the wine in our bellies and the exaltation in our heads, we stumbled over the egg-shaped cobbles of the foreign streets to the famous cathedral.' John recalls that

Llewelyn could walk, but he walked bent over stooping forward like an extremely aged man, and as he walked he clutched with his fingers the bosom of his waistcoat just above his heart. He did this so constantly that by degrees his waistcoat came to resemble one of those tattered military flags that hang from the roofs of churches. But his passion for travel, for experience, for the bivouac shocks of adventure, was so insatiable, and my own delight at being with him, for he turned everything we encountered into grist for his mill, was so reckless that we neither of us could resist the temptation of plucking out the heart of Laon's mystery.

The next night, at Basle, John, his head full of Nietzsche, 'displayed so much indifference to an accident that Llewelyn had to one of his teeth—losing it in fact as we stared at the river—that we had quite

an angry quarrel.' The diary records: 'Quarrelled with Jack & longed to kick him under the table.'

They arrived at Davos-Platz on the evening of 10th December. At Clavadel Sanatorium they were given a room with two beds.

The look of the whiteness of the snow outside, the look of the whiteness of the corridors inside, and, above all, the sound of a continual coughing in a nearby room filled us both with misgivings, and my own weakened spirit, like a widgeon wounded in full flight, shivered, faltered, and finally fell. We did not sleep much, and as soon as the wintry dawn began to show in the strange room I begged my brother to go out on to the balcony and let me know what he could see. 'Nothing but a prodigious mountain,' was his laconic report.

The contour of the mountain's topmost ridge resembled the recumbent figure of a woman and was known to English inmates of the sanatorium as 'Queen Victoria in bed.'

He was examined. The doctor looked serious and pronounced his case doubtful. 'Am prepared for anything but intend to put up a fight.' John left on the second day.

'My darling, my darling,' he stammered out—then the sky-blue lift took him down and I turned my face to the polished pitch-pine wall and cried for the second time.

He was left for nearly seventeen months to the familiar contemplation of 'Queen Victoria in Bed.'

CHAPTER FIVE

Clavadel

ALONE in his fight for life, as he lay during the first days, he let his mind dwell among 'the old familiar places in the West country.' It was, as he tells in *Love and Death*, always his device at times of dangerous illness to divert his thoughts from threatening peril. He was alone little more than a week before his sister Gertrude arrived on a visit. 'Let me remember the fine nobility of my sister's love,' he wrote now in his diary; he had the more reason twenty-five years later, when, serene and stately, she was again in daily attendance at his bedside.

The sanatorium superintendent, Dr. Frey, pronounced that he would get well, and he went downstairs for the first time on New Year's Eve. It seemed to him that he was 'at some strange children's party,' with Swiss children singing carols before a Christmas tree for the entertainment of the assembled consumptives, the gaiety of whose conversation and demeanour gathered a macabre quality from their whispering to spare afflicted lungs. On 4th January he went down to lunch and dinner for the first time, beginning to play his part in the social life of the strange community. Denied by disease more than a precarious future, the invalids were indisposed to ceremony; friendliness quickly became familiarity, and as tuberculosis in many cases enhances the sexual impulse, amorousness excited scant remark. Exultantly realizing this sudden release from conventional repression, Llewelyn yet felt no attraction to casual amours; craving romance, he almost immediately conceived himself in love with a Belgian Jewess.

For the first time I recognize that I am in the power of 'the Grand Passion that men call love.' I can't read or write, but only think of my well beloved—how she looks when she walks or leans against the white walls of the palace, the exact colour of her eyes, the fashion of her hair and the thrilling sound of her voice.

An accomplished coquette, accustomed to attentions for her wealth as well as her good looks, she at first encouraged him, so that he thought of marriage and 'a little house at Sherborne.' But she overestimated her attractions; at her first calculated unkindness he decided, 'I find that I am not in love.' Immediately repenting, she

sought him out to tell him confidentially 'of her nice relations, her garden, & her motor car,' but he was moved only to reflect that 'marriage would demand great sacrifices' of her—

that brilliant life in Brussels, those myriads of friends, the house & garden, the smoothly running & rapid motor car. But for me!! Could I cast away so recklessly my freedom more precious than gold & silver, my treasured concentration of mind, my rare isolation of soul, my unity of intention?

He became critical of her. When she self-consciously deprecated his admiration of her locket, he asked himself, 'Is she too proud of being rich?' When playing at telling fortunes, he decided that he knew her character 'better than she does herself.' At first he was touched by her look of reproach when he flirted with others, but as soon as she attempted discipline, he 'broke out . . . in rebellious mood.' By the time his sister Gertrude left on 31st January the affair was over; on 3rd February he described her as 'that exquisite little ill tempered Jewess,' on the 5th as 'the haughty Hebrew girl,' on the 19th as 'a spiteful kitten,' with 'her clumsy ancles and in-supportable leer.'

For some weeks he remained heart-whole, his most pleasant diversion being discussions with a distinguished Hungarian, Dr. Zsenda.

I loved this man, this disciple of Montaigne, and sat listening to his wisdom. He is tall and very thin, with piercing dark eyes that peer out at you half wildly, half wistfully, from a head that bespeaks exaggerated brain power. . . . The position of a sceptic, he says, is the only secure attitude to hold towards the Universe—that is, to remain *uncommitted* to the end. Nietzsche attracts youth but is discarded by old age. . . .

A few evenings later:

I stood by the polished balustrade watching Dr. Zsenda as he read in his corner by the lift. He kept shaking his long bones as though to combat the unwearied advances of Death—to shake off this last embrace; if only for a little. Eagerly he read, his black hair thrown back, his sharp foxlike head pressed close to his book: mad to extract all he could from these last rare moments of intelligent consciousness. After supper I went up in the lift with him. 'You have composed much music and written many books: you see the renown of your genius has spread,' I said to him. His hollow cheeks flushed as though with pleasure. 'No,' he rejoined. 'I have written no *great* works: you must not believe them. I did nothing in my life . . . except try to cure this' (tapping his ribs) 'and even that was a failure.' There was no fear in his eyes as he receded down the corridor, but there was, I thought, a plaintive ring in his voice, as though he was not unconscious of the ironic nature of the outrage Destiny was perpetrating upon him.'

On 19th February:

I first entered Dr. Zsenda's room. There were many books there, and two noble busts of Napoleon, and on a table by his bed lay the great man's death mask. It reposed there, still and majestic, like the dead face of a God! Napoleon's spirit seemed to fill the room. 'I have often sat watching that death mask for hours—for that is rest. . . . This,' he said, pointing to the Napoleonic relics, 'represents the past, and this *the present*,' indicating his table strewn with books and papers, 'and there . . . patiently waits the future,' & he made a sign towards his bed. He is, I believe, a very great man and I love him.

Next day:

Dr. Zsenda talked and smoked—he fiercely attacked the English treatment of criminals, especially hard labour and capital punishment. 'No one has the right to deprive a man of life. The state professing to be a moral authority, whose business it is to suppress crime, commits the same heresy: *this is an anomaly*. The criminal can be made a very useful person of society.' We talked of sexual abnormalities. I was amazed to find how well he was acquainted with the peculiar English phraseology. He is learning to play the guitar in anticipation of his last days. 'You can play it in bed and you can't play the piano,' he said.

He was stimulated by the fierce fullness of this man's mind, which, aware of inevitably imminent death, still sought voraciously after knowledge and the pleasures of the senses. It was Dr. Zsenda who led him to his greatest philosophical master, Montaigne. It was after talking with him that he wrote the summary of his attitude of detachment: 'The art of living is to be fully aware of one's personal existence—to become a privileged spectator.'

Delivered from preoccupation with the Jewess, he was reading again: Stevenson, Pater, and Thomas Hardy remained his favourite resorts, but he read 'that magnified humanized Christian crocodile G. K. Chesterton' and 'sucked him dry'—'he lacks wisdom, humour, and, I suspect, the capacity for feasting upon life's ecstasies, though apparently he can sup upon the sacrament with avidity.'

Sounded by Dr. Frey on 14th February, he was told that he might return to England in May. But on 3rd March Dr. Huggard, 'the sagacious baldheaded Consul from Davos,' warned him against returning before another eighteen months had passed.

'When you first came,' he said, 'your lungs were inflamed and spotted here & there by tubercula—these might rapidly heal or rapidly spread—if the latter, both your lungs would have been affected in a very small time and would have fallen to bits.'

Llewelyn heard this 'without feeling any very definite emotion except thankfulness for my escape.'

I wrote to Father at once, and await the answer: I want to go home, but I want even more to get well.

Often he was homesick for the west country, as when he heard that Willie, instead of emigrating to Canada, was taking a farm at Witcombe.

What a domicile! On the banks of the Yeo, overshadowed by ancient Wessex trees, muffled up in ivy, ornamented with red Barbary berries—a more mellow, a more romantic retreat it would be difficult to find. God, how gaily I will come striding down the village pavement to this farm of farms: how delicious to sit basking on an August evening in the kitchen garden and of a winter's afternoon to go splashing down that long straight drive which we know so well: Will I? I wonder, ever go down to the water meadows of an early morning, to see Willie sitting under the silky belly of a cow, with dextrous fingers filling his pail with milk.

But almost immediately arrived an attraction that not only reconciled but excited his eagerness to remain in exile. On 10th March a little new Newcastle girl came to our table. I admired her courage and liked to listen to her spirited chatter.

She was then confined to her room, but after six days he visited her.

She is not pretty, her face clumsily moulded, her head set loosely on to her shoulders. She is very thin—she has been ill for five years. Her eyes are large and round and bright, in colour a bluish grey. She is a clever girl, high-spirited and brave. She says she is 'poor and plebeian.'

Two days later he visited her again on the excuse of taking her an illustrated magazine.

I think she is very ill & know she is very amorous: her eyes are really attractive, but in spite of their appeal I could not respond to her advances. Who would care to go to bed with a bundle of bones? I felt her hip strike my hand, and it was sharp and hard like the handle of my Alpine stock.

But only the next day, when he slipped into her room by assignation,

Presently she pulled me towards her and I found myself eagerly embracing this pretty bundle of bones: inhaling the scent of her body, burying my head between the breasts, deliciously rounded, that protected her poor little wheezy chest. I wish to hell I was doing it now. I like very well to go to bed with a bundle of bones.

Thereafter he awoke always in eager anticipation of 'the exquisite joy in store.' In his excitement he confided his preoccupation to Dr. Zsenda, but received reproof. ' "Never confide your amours to others," he said,' and Llewelyn was 'conscious of having spoken like a bloody fool.'

Consenting to continuance of his cure for another year, his father wrote:

I hope now that you are stronger that you give some time regularly to reading & religious thought. Sometimes a season of forced rest from the things of the busy world becomes a time of distinct advance in our spiritual life, and I should like it to be so in your case.

Though his reading and philosophical speculation hardly corresponded with what his father would have approved, Llewelyn had a lively appreciation of his good fortune in thus securing leisure for contemplation, untrammelled by the monotonous routine of school-mastering. To Bertie he wrote on 5th April:

It is good of Father to let me stay out for another year, but they tell me I won't be able to consider myself absolutely safe for another five years, so if I get back to work next summer I shall have to be careful (I tell you it's a hell of a game—for God's sake don't neglect your colds). . . . Everyone else thinks I am to be pitied and it is an opinion which I like them to hold, but really I am as happy as possible, though I wouldn't like to tell the Montacute people this. A year's absolute leisure—think of it, endless books to read, and a succession of weird people to observe, each one of whom has been sensible, at one time or another, of Death's menacing stare: a collection of subjects more psychologically interesting it would be hard to imagine. Then, as though this wasn't enough, there has arrived lately upon the scene a little Newcastle girl who physically and morally is exactly the embodiment of what we have all been looking for. It is essential for a full appreciation of all this that I should be getting better, and so far my progress back to health has been steady. Whether this new little Easter offering of the Almighty will impede me is a question to be proved—kissing little consumptives is naturally not a very hygienic occupation and continual excitement is not good either I suppose. But I am as careful as possible, and when once she is up and out of bed there won't be so much temptation.

From the first he discerned the danger of further infection by amorous dalliance. 'I suppose 15 minutes spent in No. 2 is as bad for me as scaling a mountain,' he reflected on 20th March. But he delighted in discovering in her an amorousness, a craving for romance, equalling in eagerness his own; he was entertained by the responsiveness of her quick mind. 'Her real attractiveness consists not in her courage and vivacity, not even in the beauty of limbs,' he noted on 27th April, 'but in what might be called her social emancipation, her independence, her natural integrity—in a word her wisdom.' She evidently exerted all her wit to charm him, and left him in no doubt that he was her chief comfort in her gallant struggle against disease. So his fancy decorated her image with the romance he had been prepared to lavish upon the Jewess, and again

he conceived himself in the grip of 'the grand passion.' He read Thomas Hardy's poems to her and when, on 3rd April, he read to her extracts from his diary, he was moved to reflect that 'she is a wise girl' and 'when I look at her, as she lies back, her head supported by her two hands and her hair covering the pillow, I believe she comes very near to the ideal for which I have for so long sought.' On 4th April, when 'she looked very beautiful, flushed and animated,' he

marvelled at this last indulgence of Destiny: for what purpose has she planned this delight? Surely it was not mere chance that let us meet, a boy and girl, with every opportunity for joy, and both so wise. Is there a more recondite purpose? Is this another snare laid by that master trapper—God?

Twenty-three years later, in *Glory of Life*, he was to write:

There are only two sound reasons for abstaining from love-making. First, a weakness of mutual attraction, and Secondly, fear of the Great Pox. In life everything is so involved, and every relationship so entirely unique, that to abide by any fixed rule is impossible. Always it is a matter for wit, wisdom, and compromise. I myself believe, and always shall believe, that it shows the most sorry improvidence to turn aside from these pastimes when opportunities occur.

It was the problem he had pondered after Louis's 'ravishing of the harebells' at Aldeburgh the year before; the diaries show that he debated it with John. And he was now disposed to accept with gratitude the gift of fate.

On 14th April John arrived on a nine days' visit, having hurried back from his winter's lectures in America. Llewelyn 'was thrilled—it was like having one's people down for commem.' John was always constitutionally incapable of tidiness in attire—'Madam, I wear it like that,' he remarked imperturbably when a lady remarked some defect in his dress—and Llewelyn supervised his dressing for dinner. 'He wanted me to show off well & make a hit & do the family no discredit at the dinner table,' John recalls: 'He made me wash not only my hands *but my neck*.' Llewelyn was himself careful in his choice of clothes, wearing well-cut suits and having always a liking for bright colours—a red or bright blue muffler produced a striking effect with his curling golden hair—and at this time he retained, in John's words, 'a quaint, touching, & very naïve desire for certain sorts of social success.' With his unerring self-analysis and humour he was well aware of this tendency, and wrote in *Skin for Skin* of setting out from Chaldon for Dorchester with Theodore:

I noticed how out at the elbow, out at the knee, out at the heel, Theodore was. In those days I had not learnt how little it matters whether a man has a good

cloak over him or not. From my childhood I had always entertained certain middle-class prejudices, and I was still too close to Sherborne and Cambridge not to set considerable store by a new pair of breeches.

John approved of Llewelyn's 'little white lady.' 'At first he thought her too ill for love, just as I did, but later he realized her charm and strange fascination.' But though the brothers visited her daily and collaborated in writing a poem addressed to her, her name* significantly appears rarely in the diary during John's visit. The exhilaration of his eldest brother's company inspired a revision of his enthusiasms. When he introduced John to Dr. Zsenda, 'that sly old Hungarian aristocrat,' he notes:

He, as I suspected, is no very profound philosopher, possibly not much of a musician—only a stricken Hungarian fawn. He can be clever and charming and also very cruel: we visited him when he was in bed—'Ha! Ha!' he cried 'I'm dying,' and puffed his long cigar.

Fervently as ever he believed in John's genius, but concerned that it still lacked literary evidence, he urged that 'the year 1910 offered Jack his last chance of Fame.' John retorted that 'the greatest geniuses have never written, but like Bernie, have put their genius into their lives'; he repudiated 'as farcical and grotesque the possible annihilation of great spirits: it would be too senseless, too outrageous,' and agreed with Bernard Shaw that 'the repudiation of duty is the first step to progress.' But Llewelyn thought that John's 'idealism hitherto has been fatal—will he ever see things "bare to the buff and up to the buttocks in mire"? Will he finish his book on John Keats?'

Each day they spent as they would at home, walking farther than was good for Llewelyn and talking as they rested in a chosen spot—even indulging their taste for the secluded peace of graveyards. At the Frauenkirch,

we sat on a bench in the sunshine. Below us lay the skeletons of the Swiss peasants—a heavy churchyard calm was in the air—the silence and peace of man's last refuge from life detestable. The flies had come out; it was the first spring day.

Another day, after standing over an open grave, 'the receptacle for the latest guest whose funeral procession we had watched from our luncheon table at Clavadel,' they entered the church.

* In the extracts from the diary in *Welsh Ambassadors* the name of 'the little Newcastle girl' is disguised as 'Jenny.' In the *Letters*, pp. 54–55, she appears as 'Tilly.' Llewelyn himself called her 'Betty' in *Skin for Skin*.

Jack sat in a brown pew and I climbed up into the Lutheran pulpit as I might have in Stoke Church. Afterward we crawled into the belfry, built like Solomon's temple without nails or hammer. Here was hung the great brazen bell of Time: we tapped it with our finger ends delicately, but its answer musical and resonant sounded through Eternity. In this belfry, tiled with wooden tiles, I hid a silver coin—under the great beam on the right of the bell of time: but Jack's coin fell and was lost. Was this an omen?

At the beginning of John's visit they bought 'three books symbolic of three moods—French Grammar, *Ann Veronica*, and the *Pleasures of Tiberius*.' The last was apparently one of those 'abominable books' with which John, as he tells in the *Autobiography*, appeased his sadistic appetite. 'Jack, I feel ashamed of you, reading stuff like that,' exclaimed Llewelyn, and hurled it into the stream by the Frauenkirch Hotel. He was no puritan, but he could not abide that his brother should waste his time unprofitably. For the same reason he 'remained austere unsympathetic and we almost quarrelled' when John read aloud extracts from *Ann Veronica*, then the most sensational 'advanced' novel of the day. John was always a 'fiction-fiend,' his imagination greedily feeding on the creative flights of others, and he regarded as 'aesthetic snobbery' Llewelyn's disinclination to read any but writers of polished prose or poetic inspiration.

John's visit ended on 24th April.

On this day the master trapper was busy. He suggested new places to me in the early morning—he allowed Jack insufficient time for packing—he stole Theodore's twenty-dollar stick and led us into a dreary, damp-smelling upper chamber, giving us stale ham to eat and cold tea to drink. On the dingy wall a fox sported with its cubs. Our depression was momentarily dissipated by the appearance of the defiant driver who came shuffling up the staircase with heavy triumphant footfalls, having overtaken God in some Davos blind alley and wrested the sacred black rod from his omnipotent fist. We celebrated joyfully the victory of the foolish over the wise. Afterwards sat in a sunny window eating ice creams, between us a bowl of yellow daisies. Some gay German boys played music to me—but I could not dance. Soon found myself standing in a gloomy by-street near the railway line. Behind rose balcony upon balcony, corpse upon corpse; the wind came crying round the corner throwing dust and shavings into my flushed face. The train gave a mocking whistle and slid out of the station. I saw Jack for a moment, loving and frantic behind the carriage window, and then he was GONE. Sat again by the yellow daisies, then drove back to Clavadel alone. The Nine Days are over: I went early to bed.

Next day, visiting Jenny, he was moved to reflect

How far I should be willing to risk sacrificing my health or even my life by the acceptance of the immediate and certain gifts proffered by a good God. 'I may not

come to see you at 4, I have letters to write,' I said, looking into her wild, wild eyes which seemed to grow larger & larger and more wistful. Afterwards was very penitent & came.

But when she was well enough to come down to the dining room, he was critical of her—she 'was too fluttered and too self-conscious, lifting her skirts as though she was at a dancing school'—and when he sat beside her after supper, he 'felt mean and self-conscious, and she, I think, was bored.' She recovered his allegiance when he found her 'crying with indignation at the cruel criticism of the Clavadel Cats,' but when next she came downstairs he 'scolded her for dressing in scarlet.' He was further shaken by the judgment of a mature married woman, whom he liked and respected.

'One word,' she said, 'would describe your friend—second-rate.' O the cruelty of women! what bitches! 'But her soul,' I cried, 'she has a beautiful soul.'—'I was not speaking of the soul; we judge by appearances—by her manners, her clothes, and the way she does her hair.'—Women! Women! Ladies! Ladies!

Such criticism confirmed his loyalty. Jenny was now well enough to come downstairs most days, and he was her faithful escort, tucking her rug round her and sitting by her side. But her demands were sometimes tiresome; after she was left sitting alone while he talked with another patient,

she scolded and reproached, her great wistful eyes wide open. 'I asked you to come to me and you never did—that woman has no claims upon you.' I laughed because I couldn't cry. Sat thinking for an hour in my room, then went to bed.

Next day he 'kissed her many many times and made it up,' but when next he kissed her he wrote, 'once more risked my life.' He caught cold in the first week of May, spent some days in bed, and was losing weight. An elderly patient kindly warned him, 'You are walking too much, young man'—' "Not walking but—" I should have rapped out.' When he consulted her about 'how I was to keep out of the perilous garden,' she teased him—'you have a most elastic conscience.' He could not escape her; when he kept his bed, she visited his room, 'looking fresh and charming in her white muslin frock—warm cheeks, laughing eyes, fragrant hair—delicate white hands, frills, laces, and red, red roses.'

During these days in bed he 'lay busy writing a masterpiece'—perhaps the autobiographical fragment, *Mervyn Howard*, of which an exercise book, written in pencil and recording childhood reminiscences, is preserved. He was reading Henry James, Macaulay, and

Principles and Practice of English Composition, with *Marius the Epicurean* always at his bedside. After reading *Portrait of a Lady* he reflected:

Very often after having despatched a letter I have misgiving that the style was affected and unnatural, that the merit was ambiguous, that I have struck a false note, and have indeed made a big fool of myself. How far I am a slave to a literary mania? how far my originality is assumed or spontaneous? are questions of no small interest. But even if my writing is not the one outward and visible expression of my inward and spiritual grace, of my latent genius, but only a cultivated pose—yet so far as it is an offence to scholarly reserve and deviates from the accepted and recognized communicating manner, so far does it justify its being: surely to keep up a fusillade of these disconcerting letters against the portals of the conventional is a most commendable occupation.

While thus worried lest he was still 'playing the sedulous ape,' as when he tried to imitate Stevenson at Calne, he refused to risk tainting his mind by reading loose and careless writing, and so invoked John's charge of 'aesthetic snobbery.' Steadfastly he persevered with reading and re-reading the masters of prose in the determination to derive from familiarity with their work a style natural to himself. He lacked the conceit of countless young writers who, convinced of the originality of their emotions and experiences, conceive that they have only to splash them upon paper to be enthusiastically applauded; he applied himself to the art of expression as an aspirant painter approaches the art of painting—by studying the methods of the old masters.

Repeatedly the diary quotes Queen Victoria's resolution, 'I will be good,' but when Dr. Frey allowed him once more to leave his room, the combination of Jenny's charms with beautiful spring weather overcame his caution. One afternoon as they 'sat close together bathed in the hot sunshine,'

I confessed to having reached a perfect moment in my life. For seated on the warm sunny side of the Delectable mountains, overlooking a strange valley cool and shaded, the future had no charms & past pleasures were forgotten as I lay placid and tranquil at last in the fond eternal arms of the *Ideal Now*. 'That sounds like the sentiments of a person in love,' said Jenny, but I denied her thrice.

After such a moment as this,

A shrewed, lurking suspicion crossed my mind. Is it possible that by concentrating my attention so enthusiastically upon the philosophical ideal of a complete, many-sided life, I have sacrificed the privilege of experiencing the profoundest human emotions? Do I, with my paltry calculations of loss and gain, trample ruthlessly upon the rarest, the reddest of all life's summer roses?

Caution continually hampered inclination. His friends wrote warnings, which he copied into his diary. 'For your health's sake, *do be*

careful, and do not make love too much,' wrote Dr. O'Neill. 'Restrain, reluct, desist, it is a dangerous game to play at, if your mind is set on getting well.' And 'do be careful, dear Lulu—even to the absurdest extremes be careful,' wrote Louis Wilkinson. 'We must hear of no more colds on the chest.' Bertie wrote with bluntness characteristic of 'Brother Positive':

Well there it is, I like to think of your skill in these matters. If she is in love with you, you will probably end by marrying her. Would it be well?

Escape from entanglement was difficult in the confined community of the sanatorium, and when Jenny again fell ill and kept her bed, pity compelled him to visit her. On 25th May his sister May arrived for a month's visit, and daily walks and drives with her afforded excuse for avoiding Jenny. His health was deteriorating; the family tendency to digestive trouble prevented his gaining strength and he was steadily losing weight. On 3rd June, as he 'gaped and writhed and vomited,' the specialist applied a stomach pump; a week later Dr. Frey 'heard the white ants busy at my lungs again.' In despondence he wrote to John: 'Will I die, Daddy Jack?' and told him of his vain efforts to avoid infection from Jenny. John replied:

O my darling Lulu your news is one too much even for me. I can't say what I think of the wickedness of it. It is however borne in upon me with irresistible clearness and certainty that Jenny has nothing to do with it. Of course you were right to be cautious and on the safe side, but I don't believe that those embraces made the slightest difference. I put it entirely down to *our* pranks together when I was with you. O how I wish I had waited till September to go and see you . . . it was my visit that did it—that walk past the Conny tree and that other to the damned Belfry. We shall *never* go there again. You'll die and the light of my life will go down.

When he sent this letter to Jenny, she rebuked him for his 'dismal report to Jack.'

I suppose you wanted to alarm him as much as possible. *Of course you are not going to die!* I am just as ill as you are and would not dream of even letting my people know. Jack's letter has made me cry and I hope you are satisfied. You might have let the blame rest with me. I care less than Jack, and am therefore more able to bear it. If it was my fault, I don't care, and if you are not careful I will do it again, and really kill you this time. . . . I wish I did not love you, then I should be able to hate you as much as you deserve.

Within three days she wrote:

My dear, I am not ill this morning, but very unhappy. I want you, O I want you—nobody understands as you do.

He was unable to visit her, as on 12th June he 'went off to bed with a rising temperature' for eleven days. When his sister was out, he spent his time writing, and one day as he lay looking at 'Queen Victoria in Bed,' he 'longed to be such a master in the game of handling words—"the means or instrument of literary art"—that I could preserve on this page for the prompting of my memory the view of the hillside which I look out upon daily, framed as it might appear by my curtained window.' During these days a patient died, and 'at midnight I heard the horses of death chafe and stamp on the asphalt below, and four figures tiptoed along the white corridors.' Able to get up on 24th June, he visited Jenny.

Her cough was bad and she looked paler than ever before. Observed her narrowly as she lay there—an unhealthy woman. I kept wondering why I had loved her so much and in what manner I was to regain my liberty now. 'Don't look at me in that embarrassing way,' she pleaded. 'Don't love me too much, Jenny,' I answered irrelevantly. Then seizing her savagely in my arms, I covered her neck with cruel burning kisses. In a little while, as I lay on my chair alone, remorse and regret overtook me and I went hurrying, shamed and penitent, back to Jenny's room to make amends for my gross conduct.

On 27th June:

In the evening I sat with May on the balcony holding hands; it was our last night together. After she had gone, I lay meditating upon my possible destiny. Have I really murdered myself by my foolishness? And if I am to die shall I have acquired the appropriate philosophical serenity for such an undertaking? Determined that the next month at least should be devoted to the task of learning more than ever before the faculty of sustained realization of consciousness. I must view this spectacle of death in its right perspective—as an event, considering its finality, of very little importance, ugly enough fact though it is—for if the tolling bell really mourns over the extinction of our personal identity, if we are nothing, less than nothing, shadows, dreams, fantasies indeed, what mean these startled looks, these intervals of gloomy preoccupation whenever the suspicion hurriedly crosses our mind, like a malefactor with his plans already made, that perhaps *this* end is not so far off in the vague future as we in our more hopeful moments are ever inclined to imagine?

His temperature continued to rise, and he again reflected:

Why should I fear Death? Even though these well-known limbs, stiff, stinking, and wrapped in white linen, be hidden away soon in their appointed place—so cold and clammy and not so very far underground—I should not suffer from fear, for I will not know.

He had caught another cold and wondered, 'Will I ever be quite well again?' In twelve days after his sister's departure on 28th June he saw Jenny only twice. On 30th June he tried to explain how he

'regarded her as a danger, a perilous delight,' and she said, 'But you won't hate me?' On 2nd July she came to his balcony:

She looked pallid and unhealthy in the deepening twilight, and I shrank from her—this beautiful white-limbed vampire, whose purple lips had sucked the red life blood from my veins.

On 9th July beneath the diary's printed note, 'Fire Insurance expires,' he wrote: 'My temperature was up, making me fear that something else besides the fire insurance was about to expire.' On the 10th, written in blood, is the single word, 'Blood!'

In *Earth Memories* he declared his belief that this haemorrhage saved his life, 'clearing away much diseased tissue and allowing me, as it were, to make a fresh start in my struggle for life.' A boy whose name he disguised as Burton was taken ill the same night, and he listened as he lay to his fits of coughing in the intervals between his own bouts. When, after three weeks, he was well enough to receive a visitor, he asked for news of the boy. 'Burton! Why, Burton has been dead and buried—three weeks ago.'

For four months he kept his bed. Littleton and his wife visited him in August; later his Aunt Dora spent some weeks with him. Of the patients his most frequent visitors were Wilbraham, the dying Irishman in *Skin for Skin*, and Miss Sawyer, an elderly lady who became a devoted friend. In response to a request from Bertie for details of his daily routine, he wrote in October:

Wake at 7 a.m. and take my temperature
 8 Have breakfast
 9 Get up and lie on my balcony
 12 a.m. Miss Sawyer comes to read to me
 12.45 Lunch arrives
 2 p.m. Go into my room to piss
 4 p.m. Take my temp—drink hot milk
 5 p.m. Sometimes Wilbraham visits me, sometimes the Tetrarch
 6 p.m. Miss Sawyer arrives to read
 6.45 Supper
 Leave balcony
 9.45 Go into bed.

Apart from a few scribbled quotations from books he was reading, the diary was not resumed till 12th November, when he 'went down to lunch for the first time,' was 'much impressed' after his long confinement 'by the noise, the clattering and chattering of plates and persons,' and 'was welcomed by many people in the hall.' As he tells in *Skin for Skin*, in his determination to get well, he was 'as timid

as a brown hare'—'a sudden change in the weather would be sufficient to send me up to my chamber.'

On 15th November he accidentally encountered Jenny, looking 'ill and shy'; on the 24th she visited his room, and again on the 25th.

She seemed to be changed, transformed in mind and body from the simple, loving girl of the early spring. Is this my handiwork? Could the Jenny of the large blue hat, the Jenny with the swallow ways, have spoken thus and looked just so? My room was chilly and cold, and I wouldn't let her stay. 'If you send me away, I shall never come back again.' 'Nor will you if you remain,' I answered. When she had gone, I was troubled by my cynicism. What a subtle seducer I must appear, how incontinent, how callous and indifferent! . . . Very possibly her foolishness was the result of my attitude?

So next day he visited her 'to say I was sorry.' 'No man has treated me as badly as you have,' she said, and he replied, 'No woman has given me so much concern—has so disturbed my tranquillity.' Little more passed between them. She left Clavadel on 21st January, 1911, when the diary notes, 'Jenny came to say goodbye,' with the quotation, 'Then shall the man be guiltless; but the woman shall bear her iniquity.'

Many entries in the diary are now marginally marked in pencil; they are passages used in *Skin for Skin*. The girl there called Daphne had been a patient at Clavadel since Llewelyn's arrival, but it was only in December 1910 that he began a flirtation with her. Earlier in the year he had noted:

For weeks and even months as I busy myself with reading, with speculations & the philosophy of life, I am left undisturbed by desire, passionless and pure. Then some stray thought, some posture, some familiar or suggestive aroma even, whispers its message & I remember with a throbbing sense of ecstasy, with a tremulous thrill, that behind the barriers, beneath the theories, there still remain the crimson possibilities of life which I shall never renounce.

Daphne continually excited his desire during his last months at Clavadel, but he was careful not to repeat his dangerous passages with Jenny; though she protested, 'I couldn't endure that you should be wicked with anyone but me,' he reminded her as late as 28th February that 'I have never yet dared to kiss you on the lips.'

He was still unable to gain weight owing to digestive trouble, but by Christmas 1910 he wrote to his mother, 'I have got my digestion into some sort of order now.' At a cost of much saving and self-denial, Bertie, who was then struggling hard to succeed in his career as an architect, came to spend Christmas with him. On Christmas Eve

Lay waiting for Bertie, listening to the tinkling of the sleighs. Afterwards watched him dress in his little room, and loved his brown naked body.

He was well enough to walk most days with his brother, who soberly warned him against philandering with Daphne: 'You'll kill yourself, Lulu.'

Bertie left on 2nd January. In February Gertrude came on a second visit, and was able to carry home a hopeful report when she left on the last day of the month. During these months Llewelyn made a close friend of Wilbraham, a cultivated and refined scholar, of whom he wrote early in their intimacy:

He is a fine and noble type, but one who has fallen amongst evil people. Before this visible embodiment of the scholar and the English Gentleman I gyrate, flattering, fawning upon him, lying flat to be trodden on and frisking to be laughed at, all for the mere delight of observing the impress of my personality on the white tablet of his mind.

With Wilbraham he walked and talked. Together they would go out to tea with two attractive and ingenuous girls, Lisaly Gujer, a Swiss—later to receive him into her home with his wife during his last illness—and her friend Aida, from Milan.

The diary contains notes of many conversations with Wilbraham besides those quoted in *Skin for Skin*.

Learning and culture we must realize are not ends but means—the end is life itself. To approach life from the artistic standpoint is the secret—to become spectators, sensitive, impressionable, critical to each passing scene. That is the object of intellectual training and study.

On 13th December:

Wilbraham at lunch announced that 'it was wise to let our emotions and instincts lead us'—thus after three months do the fortifications of refinement & scholarship totter under the fierce bombardment of Youth & the New Philosophy.

Deliberately he set out to convert Wilbraham to his ideas, and on 13th March he noted exultantly:

Pye said to Wilbraham this morning, 'All your ideas are Powys's ideas now—you would not let yourself go like this a year ago.' And he is right. My personality has taken his and moulded it. The fervour of my nature has been irresistible—I completely dominate him.

This self-congratulation resulted from the first triumphant realization of his power to convince other thinkers of the veracity of his thought. In previous relationships, though, as with Louis Wilkinson and even John, he had given as much as he had received, he had been



Llewelyn Powys at Clavadel Sanatorium: from a sketch by Gertrude Mary Powys, February 1911

consciously a learner. Now for the first time he had preached his gospel successfully to convert a mind commanding respect. Wilbraham marked an epoch in his intellectual development.

John had again been ill in America, and the last fortnight of his lecturing engagements were cancelled. Having crossed the Atlantic, he paused in England only to attend his sister Lucy's wedding before travelling to Clavadel, where he arrived on 27th April, 1911.

When Jack viewed Davos in all its dreariness, the dusty streets, the shabby tarnished balconies, the extended patients, he was filled with pity and a great horror. 'O! that we might see Jesus walking through these streets, followed a little way behind by his disciples, bearded, venerable, and discussing some nice theological point.'

On the afternoon of Saturday, 29th April, 1911, the brothers left Clavadel together for England.

After spending the night of May Day at Folkestone, John and Llewelyn met Bernie O'Neill and Bertie in London before travelling to Montacute. There are a few blank days in the diary before Llewelyn settled to enjoyment of being at home, unhaunted for the first time since leaving Cambridge by thoughts of impending efforts to earn a living. At first, as he tells in *Skin for Skin*, he did not dare to walk far. He would lie, reading and writing, on a camp bed placed on the terrace walk; sometimes his mother came to read Walt Whitman to him, or he would take a short walk with her or one of his sisters.

Often extracts from the diary are collected together from different dates to suit the context of *Skin for Skin*. It was on 11th May that Theodore visited Montacute and said, as he sat, 'shabby, pallid, and meagre,' on the terrace walk in hot sunshine, 'I feel like Southey in Portugal.' It was not till 22nd May that Louis Wilkinson came to stay, and John's American friend, Robert Bright, not Theodore, was the fourth of the party when John asked Llewelyn, 'Who out of all your friends would you prefer to be God?' and Llewelyn answered, 'Louis, because he is so moral and just.' It was when John came on another visit in June that an injured toe affected his walking and Theodore wrote to their mother his regret that 'Jack had a bad toe, but if he had had a well toe he might have fallen into a mire or an evil place.'

Llewelyn's first lengthy excursion was to see Willie at Witcombe, where he 'sat on the lawn, watching Willie and Katie milk in the

orchard over the lane,' and was driven home in the evening, the brothers deep in conversation together behind the trotting pony. During June, John, Bertie, and Miss Sawyer came to stay at different times, and he would sit with them in the gardens of Montacute House. Then he began to walk round Ham Hill—'the hill'—and early in July he ventured on his and John's favourite walk to Tintinhull. On 16th July he walked to Witcombe, and refreshed by cider and ginger cake, was accompanied part of the way home by Willie. On the 20th he first ventured as far as Ilchester.

At the old manor house at Tintinhull lived Dr. Salisbury Price, a scholarly priest enjoying luxurious retirement with his books and flowers, of whom there is a sketch in 'Tintinhull Memories' in *A Baker's Dozen*.

He was an exceptional man, small and frail in appearance, but possessed of a Spartan spirit. Even his wan sensitive smile, for all its charm and urbanity, was never able to conceal the passionate partisanship that he felt for the cause of the clerical faction of his allegiance.

Delighted by Llewelyn's speculative mind and taste for reading, he made of him, as John says, 'a bit of a literary pet,' and Llewelyn found it 'a pleasant enough privilege' to walk and talk with him in his spacious garden. Llewelyn was always ready to debate Christianity with zealous proselytes; more than once before his illness he visited John's brother-in-law, T. H. Lyon, at his Devonshire retreat of Middlecot. But he was now fortified in his pagan philosophy, no longer taunted by elusive hopes, as in his Sherborne diary, of finding solace in conventional religion. The diary notes: 'Tea with Dr. Price—listened to his sly theology unconvinced.' He now abstained from attendance at his father's Sunday services, doubtless finding in his illness an excuse to save his father's feelings.

Dr. Price and his godson, Laurence Riley, were the last who ever signed the Mabelulu Visitors' Book. Riley was about Llewelyn's age, became his companion on many walks, and remained his friend and correspondent for several years. Writing of Ilchester in *Somerset Essays* and the landlady of 'The Hole-in-the-Wall,' Mrs. Mary Yard, Llewelyn recalled how 'many a time have Laurence Riley and I refreshed ourselves in her parlour,' and on 4th August the diary records:

Walked down to Ilchester with Laurence Riley. Sat in the sunshine in the yard of 'The Hole in the Wall.' The precious moments took their tone from the russet-coloured cider, and ultra-crimson geraniums. 'As long as we two live,' I said, 'this will be an immortal memory. The surface of Life, yes—that alone matters.'

It was one of the two hottest and driest summers in the first forty years of the twentieth century. Day after day the sun rose into a cloudless sky. Though he speaks of 'the summer of my twenty-third year,' it was to the scenes of this summer, with its memories of woodland walks, of occasional afternoons drifting in a canoe down the river Parrett, of his mother's reading to him the poems of Whitman and Hardy, Rousseau's *Confessions*, *Tom Jones*, and Cellini's Autobiography, as he lay on his camp bed on the terrace, that his memory reverted for the ideal setting of his 'first experience of intense love' when writing *Love and Death*. Such a romance as that with Dittany Stone was the grievous lack of his youthful years; always he had hungered for it, in whipping up sentiment for Angela, in enlarging his attraction for Viola, in his pursuit at Clavadel of the Belgian Jewess, of Jenny, and of Daphne. Its lack was the only flaw in his enjoyment of this careless, sunlit summer. Often the diary records the craving. On 4th June a pretty girl passed him in a village lane: 'she looked amorously at me, and our passionate restless souls in a moment had embraced, so that for ever we shall be conscious of a novel, voluptuous, exquisitely intimate and secret relationship.' On 11th July, having climbed to the top of the tower on Montacute Hill, he 'longed to be alone there with some little demoralized girl.' Such contacts with girls as occurred in social life at the vicarage served only to rouse desire and remind him of his lack. On the day of the Montacute Club's annual festivity, he and John picked out the prettiest girl as they watched the dancing; at a 'temperance treat' he sat beside the daughter of a prominent villager—'a fine delicate creature and like all supremely beautiful people a natural pagan.' Sometimes he went on the river with a friend of his sisters, whom he could have wished was a Dittany, so much so that in *Love and Death* he took his heroine on just such a river excursion. Echoes of his attraction for Viola stirred when she came to play tennis with his sisters:

I should like to break her heart but can make no impression at all. At tea, I even heard her murmur, 'Mr. Powys.' Her eyes attract me still—small and brown like a little wood animal's.

In August came the eagerly awaited series of holiday visitants. First, Bertie with his wife and daughter, and there was a walk to Tintinhull when they inspected the bricks and pointing of Dr. Price's garden wall. Then Littleton, who, after two days, carried Llewelyn off for a week to Sherborne, where they had daily walks in familiar

scenes and were joined on 22nd August by John, who returned with Llewelyn to Montacute to greet Louis Wilkinson's arrival on the 24th—'Louis very radiant, very boyish and profligate, in a brown dress, green shirt and bow tie.' Between Louis's departure and the arrival of Bernie O'Neill on the 31st, John and Llewelyn had a few days alone together. One day in Odcombe churchyard they met the beggar woman Betsy Cooper, daughter of Nancy Cooper of *Somerset Essays*, 'ragged, pale, and garrulous'; she talked of her mother and showed them her grave, 'while far away High Stoy raised itself over the soft blue gossamer-like haze of the Blackmore Valley.'

The story of Bernie O'Neill's nine days' stay, during which 'there was no public-house within reach that we did not visit,' is told in *Skin for Skin*. Their visit to Bertie, who was working on the restoration of Langport Church tower, is also described, and it is mentioned that Bertie 'had a French governess to look after his daughter Isobel.' But Llewelyn omitted to mention that he flirted mildly with Mademoiselle.

'O here you are,' said Bertie, appearing two minutes after I had sat behind the hedge with Mademoiselle—the situation how bitter-sweet, how poignantly ironic!

When Bernie and his son Brian drove away with Willie to stay at Witcombe, 'for a moment the sun was darkened,' but he was alone only a few days before his Cambridge friend Hodder came for a week, and after him Ralph Shirley, to talk of Goethe and Tennyson, of pantheism, and how 'the study of occultism leads to scepticism.'

'Llewelyn seemed wonderfully well at this time,' writes Dr. O'Neill: 'he walked with energy and talked on everything with interest and animation.' A slight temperature occasionally reminded him of lurking danger, but he continued to walk daily. When he went again to Langport on 12th October to see Bertie, he read in the morning paper of the death of Dr. Huggard, the consul at Davos. Though Littleton tried to persuade him to leave for Switzerland at the end of October and generously offered a handsome contribution to expenses, he elected to spend two months with Theodore at East Chaldon. On 25th October:

Dorchester once more! and there on the platform was Dostoevsky himself. Was it from Danish ancestry, I wondered, that the tawny redness of his beard was derived?

Daily he walked with Theodore or Katie, as he tells in *Skin for Skin*, hoping that the salt sea air would heal his lungs and learning the

names of all the bays and headlands on the coast which later he was to know and love so well.

The diary during these two months was fully used for Chapters 9 to 13 of *Skin for Skin*. It was on 21st November that he visited Wilbraham, who was lying ill at Poole and about to return to Clavadel.

Knew by his hunted, haunted look that he was dying—it was pretty to see how I fled from his room, from the sanatorium to the sea. Twilight had fallen before I reached it. I walked along the sands to Boscombe pier, and every moment was of pure gold. To be alive, only to be alive—may I never forget the privilege of that.

On 12th December, beside a drawing of a skull and crossbones, is the note, '*Wilbraham Died*,' and he was impressed by the coincidence that on the same day of the previous year he had entered Wilbraham's room at Clavadel 'with the immemorial question on my lips, "Is there, is there balm in Gilead?"'

On 25th November an old Sherborne friend of Bertie's, Lionel Room, came to lodge in a coastguard's cottage at the White Nose and frequently accompanied Llewelyn on his walks. Every day there were impressions to be recorded; often the barest note—'a kingfisher flashed past me,' following an account of a walk in the Frome valley—was registered to recall the many aspects of a scene to his memory. His habit of storing impressions is well illustrated by the comment on glimpsing 'a lovely girl' in the doorway of an inn:

Like a true epicure I passed on, so as to muse upon so perfect an impression. But another day I will return.

On 10th December he notes: 'For the first time since the first of May I stayed in all the day long.' It was on 22nd December—not on Christmas Eve (which fell on a Sunday), as stated in *Skin for Skin*—that he and Theodore made their excursion to Dorchester for Christmas shopping, returned home by Max Gate, and were given tea at the lonely vicarage by the vicar's daughters, to whom Theodore afterwards read from the Book of Amos, with his newly purchased sledge-hammer leaning against his chair. On Christmas Day he and Theodore 'walked to the tavern at Osmington Mills, then over Poxwell downs,' and in the evening 'drank together' and read Rabelais. On New Year's Eve, before the two brothers walked out to the Stone Circle, as related in the thirteenth chapter of *Skin for Skin*, the household drank champagne together and read a poem,

Theodore choosing his favourite lyric, 'Go, lovely Rose,' while Katie read an extract from Whitman and Llewelyn from Poe.

He had arranged to escape the worst of the winter by going out to Switzerland in the New Year, but not to Clavadel. He wished to avoid the depressing atmosphere of a sanatorium, with its insistent infection by amorousness with another patient. He chose Arosa, 'a small winter-resort in the Engadine as far as I knew unvisited by consumptives.' His father thought he was 'right in wishing to avoid the consumptive haunts,' but counselled him to be careful: 'I should prefer paying more that you might be quite comfortable and so more likely to get quite well.' When his father came over to Chaldon for the day, Llewelyn apparently satisfied him that Arosa was a suitable resort. Littleton and Willie came over on different days to say good-bye. He enjoyed final walks and talks with Theodore, of whom he wrote on 7th January:

Again and again in my intercourse with Theodore, I am made aware of his inflexible loyalty to the poetic conception of the world which it has been his taste to create—a conception fine, ideal, and nobly intolerant of the unilluminated tracts in mind and matter.

On 10th January Theodore accompanied him as far as Folkestone; he arrived at Arosa the following night.

He had chosen to stay at the best hotel; in *Skin for Skin* he humorously relates his vexation on finding that dinner-jackets were worn instead of 'tails,' feeling 'as if the eye of every waiter and every guest were riveted on the superfluous part of my dress.' An English clergyman invited him to share his table, but Llewelyn quickly discovered that he was one of those 'whose one object in conversation is to score you off, to gain a series of intellectual triumphs either by discharging information out of his mental store-cupboards or by asking impossible questions.' Another Englishman named Rowland proved a more congenial companion, and he proposed their removal to a smaller but more agreeable hotel on 30th January.

At first he limited his walks, being troubled by his risen temperature. 'Fear like a live frog leapt in my throat,' he noted on 13th January. In a postscript to a letter pungently complaining that Theodore and Llewelyn had passed through London without pausing to visit him, Bertie wrote, 'Don't speak to girls.' But already he was flirting dangerously with a handsome young Englishwoman for whom he felt only physical attraction, despising her inhibition by social convention.

What a narrow, limited, tight little soul this girl has—compact, close-drawn, like a packet of sporting outfit from a firm in Birmingham.

Yet he felt her tremble as he laid a hand on her waist to guide her up a forest path, and before he changed hotels he had progressed to the point of seduction.

At the second hotel he flirted harmlessly and romantically with a girl of more attractive personality, whom he called Imogen in *Skin for Skin*. She or Rowland was the companion of his daily excursions during February. A chastening experience awaited him when he ventured tentative advances to the Parisian mistress of an elderly German. While her keeper knocked the snow from her heels, 'I held her hand so as to support and balance her—she looked up at me questioningly.' Within a few days her keeper was absent for the night; Llewelyn found her 'in a wicked lascivious mood' and she invited him to her bedroom. The diary records:

Went to bed and to sleep. Not only did the lack of lust deter me from crossing the passage but also the persistently recurring suspicion that my lady had the Pox. To degrade my soul with the very dregs of desire and then to be stung—that would be a *faux pas* indeed.

Skirmishing for slight favours, he was unaccustomed to willing asylum where he had thought to find a fortress, and his amorousness evaporated before an access of 'Powys caution.'

The lady extended her invitation on the night of 27th February. Next day he avoided her, and on the 29th he crossed the Furka Pass to Davos, as described in *Skin for Skin*. 'It is paradoxical enough,' wrote Louis Wilkinson in *Welsh Ambassadors*, 'that Llewelyn should be at the same time so full of Powys caution and yet capable of such recklessness.' At the end of January his father had written to him: 'I am pleased to hear that you are able to get about again, but you must be careful not to wander into dangerous places.' His illness frequently reminded him of its persistence. On 1st February, 'This morning there was blood in my spittle.' On 20th February, 'My expectoration has been increasing—my hip aches—I shall die—I know it.' But on the morning of the 27th, 'My temperature for the first time for 6 weeks has come really down,' and having discovered that, though by train a twenty-four-hour journey separated Arosa from Davos, 'as the crow flies, only some fifteen or twenty miles of mountain' intervened, he determined to venture on the journey as soon as the weather seemed set fair. On 29th February, 1912:

My temperature was up but under the influence of a cloudless sky I determined

to get over the Furka Pass. Now or never, I thought. With my snowshoes in my hand, without a word to anyone, I set out from the Hof Maran.

'To the Frauenkirch' directed the signpost in the valley and I wondered if returning I should again see it on this day. The Furka Pass was a sheer sheet of frozen snow. Giddily I unstrapped my shoes, one of them as I did so nearly slipping away from me, and at each step digging my boots through the crust, slowly, very slowly, made my way across. It was tiring work even then climbing up the mountains, and once my heart nearly stifled me with its palpitations. No tracks were before me—only virgin snow. A painted butterfly, a tortoiseshell, came dancing along—frail and dainty beauty for so lone and chill a place—the only living thing I saw in all my journey. Presently to my right a monstrous granite rock took the form and shape of the Grey Lady, that prostrate figure I used to look at from Clavadel. I must have been far up in the mountains now. The shadows on the snow seemed a heavy drunken purple, and close above me—so close that I staggered with dread, as one smitten—glowered the flaming countenance of the sun. How remote seemed then the pleasant familiar places of the green earth! Cole's orchard or the fields by the station stream—surely my footsteps (as I could trace them far away over the white plain behind) could not really have led from there.

At last I reached the tree line and came upon a woodcutter's path down which I took my way, until, rounding a corner, the red roof of the Sanatorium stood suddenly into view. Then it was I experienced a strange crazy feeling of enchantment, as a clairvoyant might surveying the features of some faraway place conjured up before him. In one moment of time, abruptly, with a jerk almost, I had interlinked two of my life scenes as I had so often dreamed of doing—Lisaly and Imogen had met, had kissed each other. I ate my lunch at the Frauenkirch but my mouth was parched and dry—sometimes too, as I breathed, I was conscious of a hitch, a catch, in my right lung. At three o'clock I began walking up to Clavadel along the Zertig road, drinking a glass of milk at the Mill and even touching with my finger, as I always used to, that curious grey flaw in the surface of the plastered wall.

By four o'clock I was at Clavadel, was chattering with Bushby. Visited the jocular whisperer—still alive, but dying, dying, dying—the look of his head narrow, pallid, sideways inclined, as he lay in bed, has fixed itself in my memory, as will happen sometimes with quite insignificant passing attitudes and expressions. Finally I went to Bellevue to see Lisaly, just returned, so I was told from Zertig. 'Lulu, Lulu,' she cried, coming into the sitting-room where I was waiting with outstretched arms. A large bunch of primroses was on the table and their faint springtime scent refined itself in the air of the little downstairs chamber as we talked, she so innocent, so exultant, so child-like. 'How long will this last?'—these I learnt were Wilbraham's last words. She promised to come to breakfast with me to-morrow down at the Frauenkirch.

As I walked there in the evening . . . it was very dark and I held my breath, fancying for the moment that I heard the panting, the scuffling of Death's hound somewhere close upon me. Went to bed but couldn't sleep, my mind busy with the day's adventures.

Suddenly for no apparent reason (I felt no impediment in my breathing and no pain) I *knew*—I was *convinced*—I was going to be ill. My body, faithful always, must have flashed the evil news to my intelligence before ever it was itself aware of pain

or physical sensation. Soon there was something in my mouth. Under the influence of my misgiving I turned on the electric light. It was BLOOD.

Then for many hours I lay sleepless, flat on my back, this coming, as it seemed to me then, as a final crimson seal upon my gloomiest suspicions—the consummation, the upshot, the final issue of those rising temperatures of the last two months. As the hours passed slowly by, my mind was occupied with estimating the opportunities of life which, even at the worst, yet remained. 'Tis part of the business of life to take it handsomely,' and after a while I began quite eagerly to anticipate, to envisage my existence during those last fleeting weeks, pondering my power to preserve my philosophic consciousness and lust for sensations up to the very last. Death as an end in itself, with my interest in the passing moments as unflagging, as sustained as ever, eking it out, clinging frantically to what bodily sensations I was still capable of experiencing, greedy of very terrors—the stiffness, the shroud, the coffin, its destination. To advance upon Death boldly, gladly, as the greatest adventure of all, determined to wring even from that last remnant of life its unique possession of experience. . . . To lose at the last one's sense of the brilliant dramatic inconsequence of Life—that would be unfortunate; to be submerged by its reality—that would indeed be tragic.

Got up before breakfast and went to meet Lisaly. Dropped my infected handkerchief into the Landwasser. Spat on the snow—red upon white, red upon white! Told Lisaly everything while we breakfasted together. . . . I was to go to bed now, and travel home on Tuesday.

As he wrote to John, for four days he lay in his lodging before being taken to the sanatorium.

Till Monday I lay there in that tiny upper room, the great pre-Reformation bell (as Bertie called it) sounding the passing hours with consoling resonance from the timber tower. Who could not receive the ultimate decree acquiescing with such a soothing harmonious testimony to man's fleeting days ever and again so sweetly audible? Nobody in Clavadel was to know, such was my wish—no one save Lisaly, who, like Regina, came each day over the snow of Pedlar's Hill. She washed my face and combed my hair. She brought me primroses and Shakespeare's Sonnets and smoothed out my pillows. Then suddenly I was borne away to the Sanatorium in a dark hearse-like sleigh just as three years ago. I am now in room No. 18, and as I look out at the familiar mountain, and hear Dr. Geizer's hurried footsteps in the corridor and lift those queer dish covers, it is surely as if last year had never been. *Incredible, incredible* that you and I should have pressed the exquisite voluptuous sap from the bluebells in Park Cover—have taken home a long-lipped yellow iris, impious, imperial from the millstream bank—have really met on the Middle Marsh road that summer morning.

After little more than a fortnight he was pronounced well enough to travel, and on 19th March he hastened home, eager to leave the scenes of his illness for the sunlit countryside of the previous summer. 'What pleasure to leave these perpetual snows for the painted green fields of the lowland!' He spent a week in London, staying with Bertie, except one night with Ralph Shirley, before going to Montacute.

CHAPTER SIX

The Last of Montacute

QUICKLY he settled to the life he had led on his return the previous year. Daily he took short walks with his sister Gertrude; he paid frequent visits to Dr. Price at Tintinhull; his mother read *Don Quixote* to him as he lay on his camp-bed on the terrace walk. But he was surprised at finding himself unable to recapture the serenity, the zest for enjoyment, of the previous year. As he relates in *Confessions of Two Brothers*, 'I found myself immersed in a great wave of apathy' which he was at a loss to explain. Was it that 'the iron of consumption was at last entering my soul' or that my enforced inaction was dulling my capacity for pleasure?

The latter was partly the cause, as the diary reveals. When he took a favourite walk on 22nd April—past Wulham's Mill, he 'was aware of a certain impatience—a restlessness unfelt last year.' Again, on a walk to Thorne with his sister May:

All the time as we walked through these fields I was in a restless, discontented mood, pining for opportunities for love, for thrilling experiences in the fields gay with sunshine, in gardens languorous, incense-bearing and unknown. Your youth is flying. A thousand passionate girls are on every side waiting and willing for love, for dalliance, such as yours—what are you at, tarrying, lingering here day after day?

Burningly he yearned for romance, for fulfilment of his youth's hot blood, for his Dittany of *Love and Death*, and with dudgeon and despair he saw his desire inexorably bound by the limiting devices of social convention. More than ever he was irritated by his mother's fatalistic resignation; in the previous September he had thought her an 'insanely humiliated Dostoevsky figure' and found 'her abasement and self-abnegation . . . singularly depressing.' Now, one afternoon watching a woodcutter felling an old tree in the lane, he exclaimed delightedly at the beautiful view disclosed when the tree fell. But his mother turned to him and said 'Oh, Lulu, I don't like this world—it's all cutting down beautiful things and killing . . . we must cling to the Christian hope.' Such resignation to mere endurance of this life as a period of waiting for release into an unknown and unproved future existence was the antithesis of Llewelyn's philosophy. But while his mother's attitude inhibited sympathy with her, he violently resented 'the extinguishing weight of Father's monstrous egoism,'

which he regarded as having accepted unquestioningly the sacrifice of his mother's subordination.

As Louis Wilkinson has written, 'Llewelyn was always as capable of being bowed down by care and gloom as he was of being liberated by gaiety, lust, or excitement.' A son of the sun, like a flower he flung up his face to the light, but his petals closed under frowning clouds and he bent his head before an east wind's icy blast. Like Mr. Jarndyce, he now felt the wind in the east:

When I went out in the early mornings, I no longer wanted to smell ground ivy, to smell the very earth itself, my imagination seemed suddenly drugged, my senses seemed to have lost their finer edge and the dead weight of the commonplace dragged me down and filled my spirit with lamentable misgivings. I wrote to my brother in a curiously peevish tone. I accused him of deserting me.

His blame of John was not without reason, for John was unwittingly the major cause of his depression. When he had written news of his collapse after crossing the Furka Pass, John had replied from Pittsburgh:

Lulu, my darling, I am very distressed to hear that you still have the taste of Death in your mouth. What can I say: I wish you had never gone to these dangerous places. I fear, I fear, I fear. I believe it would have been better had you stayed at East Chaldon after all. However, what will be will be, and your assertion of caution may save you yet.

But after this preamble of condolence, he proceeded:

But Lulu, there will be some wonderful things to tell you when we meet. It is terrible not to be able to talk to you now. There are exquisite and rare experiences to be related—new and unexpected and by the gods *impossible*. Do you know that I suddenly discovered (I won't say more) in a volume of the Golden Treasury in the hands of—no! I name her not—what avails such naming! What you think?—Your picture! Yes, Lulu's picture, suddenly discovered so, in an interlude between vista and vista, between cry and cry. To see at such a moment in such hands your grave, yet wistful yet anxious look—you know how you look in your photographs? What a curious sensation—and to find that Lulu or Llewelyn was a word sweet and familiar and couched with most distant, the most magical reverence—to find this as the last ultimate impossible quality in one too subtle, too imaginative, too devilish, too divine to have been born at all in the world.

Bless you,
JACK.

To a sick man such a provocative letter was sufficiently irritating, but another, entirely omitting any expression of anxiety about Llewelyn's health, followed.

Events have followed one another. I hardly know what to write. Long ago Frances knew you though you did not know her; she heard you lecture, and that

quaint poem of Shelley's about Pan's sweet pipings—do you remember how you selected that particular one over the schoolroom fire (I never cared for it)—she turns to still with little tender memories 'Lulu reads it better than you do,' she said. I saw her first in Feb. (I must get the exact date—the devil carry away my bloody memory) and Louis saw her exactly a fortnight ago to-day. They are going to be married on Easter Monday. . . .

A note came from Louis Wilkinson:

Dearest Lulu, I am to be married on April 8th in Philadelphia to Frances Josefa Gregg, whom I met through Jack. On April 18th we sail with Jack & May to Liverpool. Eternal love, dear Lulu,

from Louis.

Llewelyn's first feeling of grievance against his beloved brother's neglect of himself in distracted admiration for a woman was deepened by the surprising news that this woman was to be his friend's wife. His brother and his friend, both entangled in exciting romance, in cruel contrast with his own loveless, forlorn condition! In his diary he wrote:

I was bitter at heart. Ah! why, Daddy Jack, do you love these Ultima Thules more than me!

In this mood he wrote upbraiding John for desertion, for forgetfulness of the walks and talks so pregnant of pleasure for both. John found the letter awaiting his arrival at Burpham after landing at Liverpool and replied on 24th April:

Guilty! that is all I can say. No explanations or apologies or anything else—Guilty. But this outraged cry of yours, my friend of friends, has gone to my heart like a sword. Once more the old wave of our love for each other flows over me. May the gods not forgive me for this! What do you think I should have felt if, before I could answer this letter, you had been dead? . . . On Saturday we shall be together. Jealousy? do I then not know what that means? Do I not know that poisoned spear? Jealousy! it seems then that a fatality still holds us together; for that also it has been left for us to know in this fatal year. I write no more now. All will be revealed (or nearly all) when we meet. Am I doubly like St. Peter? O Lulu, Lulu, forgive me, my darling, I have, I too, gone where the waters meet, the bitter salt waters. As the Catholics' Litany goes, 'Jealousy is dolorous, Turn away thy face from us.'

DADDY JACK.

On 27th April Llewelyn recorded:

Jack arrived in a motor car from Yeovil. For the first few hours after he arrived I scolded him bitterly, sitting at the open nursery window. Most of my reproaches were infinitely mean and base: he offered no defence. 'Your apathy,' he said, 'I can soon dispel that. Already I see the great brazen doors swing back on silver hinges, for my youth has been renewed.'

John proposed that he and Llewelyn should accompany Louis Wilkinson and his wife to Venice. He told Llewelyn that the real explanation of his apathy was 'the collapse of Epicureanism.'

Youth with you is beginning to ebb, and youth is the essential impetus or soul of that kind of attitude. Youth gives depths to the surface of life. Without her fling, her insatiable appetite, Paganism is not enough and there comes a time when earth and sensations no longer satisfy.

They fell into their inevitable argument about survival of the soul, John exclaiming:

'I tell you, my dear Lulu, that Frances has revealed a thousand new possibilities. There are divine things well enveloped, I tell you, there are wondrous things. Console yourself in the contemplation of the ultimate mystery of all things, now as always inscrutable. I tell you this visible universe cannot be all—the very fact that we can review this one and find it wanting, and conceive of others, proves that.

John was in love, and Llewelyn argued, 'Your obsession obtrudes itself.' But John persisted:

I have learnt many things from Frances. I've learnt the value of your love as being something of far greater import than our old Pagan transports together. Your apathy does not matter; it is an interesting psychological problem, that's all.

Unconvinced, but redeemed from despond by the inspiring conversation and company of his brother, Llewelyn cried in glad relief, 'Oh, Daddy Jack, I felt myself being submerged in a quagmire, the quagmire of the commonplace, and called to you.'

Though the Sherborne doctor advised against Llewelyn's travelling John and Llewelyn won their father's consent to the Venice trip. John records that he 'received a very stern letter from A. R. P. on this occasion,' and Bertie wrote bluntly to Llewelyn:

I'm very sorry to hear that you are contemplating going to Venice. It seems to me a very foolish plan. I had rather you did not die just yet. . . . Let us worship rare pleasure. All very well, but *don't do it*.
A. R. P.

The diary for 1912 ends in the third week of May, when John and Llewelyn left for Venice to meet Louis and Frances Wilkinson. Llewelyn wrote of the trip in *Confessions of Two Brothers*, John in his *Autobiography*, and Louis in *Welsh Ambassadors*. 'I have forgotten nothing,' wrote Llewelyn, and John and Louis, observing how he greedily savoured every impression, were amused by his habit of recognizing in every fresh spectacle some resemblance to scenes stored in his retentive memory. 'How he begins, at once, to Luluize Venice!' exclaimed John. This habit of associations of impressions

assisted his memory; it was also the essential equipment of the essayist, enabling the fecundity of analogy, the wealth of illustration, to enliven and elaborate discourse with illuminating digression.

The pivot of the party was the 'very spirited and beautiful girl' described in John's *Autobiography*. As has appeared, John had met Frances Gregg in the previous February and fell immediately under the spell of her charm. As he could not marry her himself the surest way to secure her for their 'circle' seemed to be marrying her to another of the 'circle.' He had a reputation as an incorrigible match-maker. In *The Buffoon* Jack Welsh, after introducing Edward Raynes to his Eunice, warns him:

That's my worst vice, this yielding to the temptation of egging others on. If I were a Catholic, that is the only sin I should be really ashamed to confess. It is unpardonable, this mania for drawing others into one's own net just to see how they look when they're there! And I'm always doing it. I lead my friends on to marriage—even my brothers. Then I have a sudden panic, a mad reaction, when it's too late. Well, at least I suffer.

In *Swan's Milk*, the story of his early life veiled as fiction, Louis Wilkinson tells how, feeling that 'this unromantic, disjointed sensually spasmodic way of life of his could not, must not, go on,' his hero 'left England at the end of 1911 determined to love and to marry.' He met Frances Gregg through John, and within a fortnight their marriage was arranged.

Llewelyn went to Venice agog with eagerness to meet this girl who had enslaved his brother, married his friend, and long before had been sufficiently impressed by his own lectures to preserve his photograph. He wrote a description of her to his sister Gertrude:

The first impression she produces is of one walking in a trance, her head full of dreams, with the curious look of a person going on a *second errand*, which separates her, as if by deep estranging sea, from everyone she meets—the look which some old painters have given to 'our Lady' when thinking of her as a little girl. The next impression is of extraordinary timidity and shyness—more than shyness, a certain reluctance to step out into the world at all—precisely like the look of a Hamadryad standing waiting at the entrance of her hollow tree till the steps of some passing faun have died into silence down verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways, or like the look of a little naiad hesitating to step into the sunlit water out of the shadow of some great rock. She is tall and dark and very supple and slender—her wrists the smallest I have ever seen and her ankles also. But, if you understand me, she is not *thin* but athletic and boyish in figure and yet moulded with quite girlish and almost Tess-like contours, such as appeal to the pathetic, if not sadistic instincts of our friend of Max Gate Dorchester.

For the first time he found himself on terms of intimacy with a beautiful woman of charm and sophisticated culture. Inevitably his inflammable temperament responded, and seeing John and Louis devoted in their attentions, he soon conceived himself as deeply in love as either.

Three friends romantically in love with one woman—it was a situation such as Elizabethan and Restoration dramatists delighted in, though shocking to the middle-class respectability created by Victorian convention as a barrier between human relationships. Frances was a worthy heroine for the drama, for John has described her as having the quality of Doña Rita in Conrad's *Arrow of Gold*. Her elusiveness enhanced her allure, but her personality exacted respect and her tactical skill kept her admirers at the distance of courtiers or suitors rather than lovers.

The men were likewise suitably cast for their parts. Bound by the deep affection of devoted friendship, they were yet accustomed to scoring off each other and they exulted in rivalry for their lady's smallest favours. John, the eldest of the three, was probably the most deeply in love; sensitive to the slightest sign of emotion, he only once observed 'real distress' on Llewelyn's face, and that was when his illness placed him at some momentary disadvantage. Between the brothers there was no jealousy, and any such weakness was incompatible with Louis's emancipated character. His humour rendered him ever ready to laugh the loudest even at his own momentary discomfiture, his ageless love of raillery delighted in teasing his friends, and he felt secure in the confidence of a newly accepted husband.

When *The Buffoon* appeared in 1916, Llewelyn, incensed by the caricature of Jack Welsh and seeing in it an attempt to ridicule John, accused Louis of jealousy of John, and despite Louis's denials and John's refusal to take offence, he maintained his belief. 'I have always recognized the fact since the publication of *The Buffoon*,' he wrote to Louis after the publication of *Swan's Milk* in 1934, 'that you intended to revenge yourself upon Jack subtly and insidiously in season and out of season—with "I mean no harm Master" always upon your lips.' In *Welsh Ambassadors*, Louis denied this charge. 'Being jealous of John would have been something like being jealous of a Martian,' he wrote; 'if he and I were sometimes attracted by the same women we were always quite differently attracted.' He quotes a letter from John, written in 1907, to show that antagonism

existed between them long before they met Frances, and both in *Swan's Milk* and *Welsh Ambassadors* emphasizes 'that curious co-existence and conjunction of real admiration and love with equally real condemnation and distaste (if not, as Llewelyn is so sure it is, real hatred) that were in my deepest feelings towards John.'

Both John and Louis have ever revelled in self-analysis, and John enjoyed examining the sources of Louis's feelings towards him as eagerly as Louis analysed their reactions. Louis confesses in *Swan's Milk* that at their first meeting John 'greatly impressed and fascinated' him. John was the first man of obvious genius he had met; his nine years' seniority was formidable to an undergraduate. John started him on his career as a lecturer; with individual qualities quite unlike John's he began by studying John's technique. He confesses that John influenced him, and his dislike of John's extravagances inspired resentment of the fact of his influence. 'All those ambiguous margins and fluctuating windows of my nature—to which even Llewelyn has referred ere now as "John's spiritual insincerity"—were to Louis unmitigated vexation,' wrote John. 'When they seemed to him authentic he found them morbid; but as a rule they struck him as riddled through and through with a perverse and sickly falsity that revolted him.' In his love and admiration for John, Louis was exasperated by these apparent defects; if he had 'not been really fond of John he would never have been so bitter nor so warped in his view of him.' Logically it would appear that in his egoism—'his real essential egoism—for egoistic he certainly is,' says John—he was jealous of John's acceptance, with all his defects, as a genius in the estimation of their friends. He was himself, from the time of his notoriety at Oxford, the spoiled darling of his friends. 'The Archangel' was a privileged personality. And it must have seemed to him that, with his debonair assurance, his polished manner and conversational powers, his logical clarity, objectiveness, and balance of mind, his direct and decisive certainty of approach, he should have been able to surpass John in the measure of homage secured from their circle.

Llewelyn unconsciously irritated Louis's feeling against John. At Cambridge it had seemed to Louis that with Llewelyn he had achieved a *Blutbruderschaft*, an indissoluble friendship, a spiritual union between man and man, such as Birkin desired with Gerald Crich in Lawrence's *Women in Love*. It was therefore natural that

he should feel impatience on discovering the existence between John and Llewelyn of an even closer bond, and since Llewelyn's attitude to him was as unaffected by his devotion to John as to any of his brothers and sisters, his resentment turned against John. And John's sadism and masochism moved him, on recognizing Louis's irritation by certain of his idiosyncrasies, to indulge them the more in his company, so rousing Louis to declamation against him and Llewelyn to his defence.

In Venice, however, Louis had the advantage; in possession of Frances, he could feel like Edward when he felt the response in Eunice's first kiss, 'So much for Jack Welsh!' He could afford to smile on his rivals with careless good-nature, while John indulged his masochism by prostrating himself as a hopeless lover and Llewelyn dramatized his forlorn condition as an invalid, stricken in the prime of his romantic youth.

The athletic boyishness of figure which Llewelyn noted as an attraction in Frances was enhanced by her dressing as a boy during their stay in Venice. Italy was then engaged, as John relates, in 'some small kind of a war,' and the spectacle of three strangers in attendance on a beautiful girl-boy excited suspicion in minds unbalanced by fear. When they were arrested, none of them possessed a visiting-card, but Llewelyn produced one of his father's which caused sly chuckles about 'the padre.' When an official inquired at their lodging,

once again Llewelyn saved us; for, after his fashion, he had so courted, cajoled, caressed, and generally bewitched our landlady, that the woman led the emissary to think that our social position at home, in spite of the padre's card, was a tremendous one, and that we were only behaving in our accustomed manner, like so many Milords Byron.

Both John and Louis have related how, with an introduction from Ralph Shirley, they made the acquaintance of Baron Corvo, who, then enjoying a rare period of prosperity, lavished invitations upon them. John was in no mood for disturbance of his idyll, and forgot his 'usual affable politeness' when Corvo persistently pressed an invitation. If they were engaged the next day, perhaps the day after, or the day after that—till John shouted, 'We're engaged! All the time! Up to the hilt!'

Returning homeward from Venice, Llewelyn was taken seriously ill at Milan. On 19th May the last entry in his diary before leaving home records: 'Felt certain familiar pains in my chest, and vaguely

speculated. . . . What will happen?' In Venice 'all the time I was conscious of my sickness.' On arriving at Milan,

tired after the journey, I took a hot bath, always an unwise thing for a consumptive to do. In a quarter of an hour I was once more coughing up blood. For weeks I lay on my back unable to move. To add to my misery I underwent a severe attack of kidney stone.

As John remarks, in his illness 'he was attacked in so many directions at once.' At Clavadel digestive disorder had delayed recovery of strength to combat the tubercular disease, and this attack of kidney stone was the first manifestation of a third affliction that pursued him to the end of his life. The first hint of its presence appeared late in December of 1909 when he 'woke at midnight with a fierce pain in the back.' Eighteen months later, on 4th June, 1911, while walking at Montacute, he 'crouched over a gate with a gnawing pain in my back,' and in the interval he had experienced such pains from gravel that he confided to Bertie his fear lest 'I've got tuberculosis in the testicles and am destined to be a eunuch for the rest of my days.'

John remained in faithful attendance during the weeks at Milan. When Llewelyn was fit to travel, they arranged to meet the Wilkinsons at Genoa. It was there that John, excited at being again in the company of his Venetian boy-girl, glanced up at the hotel balcony and saw 'Llewelyn's troubled forehead and that "woman's mouth,"' as he leant forward, 'still in that kind of old-fashioned white night-shirt that used to be so carefully inscribed "L. Powys" in indelible marking-ink for the benefit of his Sherborne or Cambridge washer-woman, supporting himself against a marble pillar on this Genoese balcony, tantalized by the cruelty of the handicap of his illness.'

They sailed home in a Dutch ship, and the crew was horrified by Llewelyn's illness. The weeks in Milan were reflected in his wan and wasted looks, and his sickness was intensified on the voyage by an attack of dysentery which prevented his going ashore at Tangiers. 'Don't you dare ever again to bring that brother of yours on a Dutch ship,' raved one of the officers, brandishing his fist in John's face.

Arriving in England, John also was taken ill with gastric trouble, and together they went to stay with Littleton at Sherborne, where they benefited from the medical skill of Dr. Rickett. John believed that the coincidence of Montaigne's having suffered from kidney stone linked Llewelyn the closer to his philosophy.

The greatest pain I've ever seen second to neuralgia (as I've never seen cancer or childbirth) [writes John] was when at Montacute he passed a stone. It was in the day-nursery . . . & I can recall how he cried out, 'My God! My God!' & the unspeakable relief of the *tinkling* sound when the small stone—and it wasn't so *over* small—fell in the pot.

From this time till the end of his life Llewelyn took 'helmatol' to restrain the formation of stone in the kidney. When staying with John at Hillsdale in 1931, he wrote to his wife in New York, reminding her, when she came at the week-end, to bring two bottles of helmatol. The autopsy after his death revealed that his left kidney contained 'a large rarified calculus' of calcium phosphate; the kidney was shrunken and indurated, the stones having grown to fill up completely the pelvis of the kidney.

Relieved from pain by the passage of the stone, he concentrated on struggling against the consumption. He slept outside in his camp-bed on the terrace-walk. He carefully regulated his walks, drank quantities of fresh milk, and sucked raw turkey's eggs 'with all the care and dainty precision of a punctilious weasel.' He neglected no advice in his efforts to get well, and when their old coachman recommended him to rub his chest with goose grease, 'my sister Gertrude every night would dress me with it as I lay in my bed under the stars.'

Fretted by wastage of his youth in sickness, he saw his reflections in a distorting mirror of enforced leisure. He magnified his attraction to Frances into a hopeless romantic passion; at first he even suspected that Louis's feeling towards himself might have changed. 'I don't think your bantering mood is very nice, Archangel,' he wrote in self-pity; 'I don't care for the way you tease me about your wife.' Louis's method of heartening Llewelyn was always to minimize the extent of his illness; together they always laughed at life, and he couched his letters in terms of gaiety and banter. When Llewelyn received 'a generous, friendly, and above all magnanimous letter' of reassurance, 'written with such tact and taste that I was spared feeling either a cad or a fool,' he replied:

Of course I'm a bloody fool as a psychologist, and imagine that because the object of my emotional distraction happens to be your wife, you would feel animosity and choler. Apparently in reality my distress as I lie on this particular rack is to you by no means a displeasing spectacle. 'What is the Archangel's attitude towards me?' I asked Jack rather nervously when he returned from Aldeburgh. 'Extremely friendly,' was the answer. 'He likes you to pine away for love of his wife,' and I suppose it does add a certain pleasing and complimentary piquancy to the state of matrimony.

He was beguiling his enforced idleness, he told Louis, by embroidering in silks the golden lion of St. Mark as a present for Frances. When Louis brought her to Montacute, Llewelyn was well enough to take walks, and he delighted in setting his divinity against the background of the scenes he loved so well. Naturally, Frances was well content in the romantic devotion of an interesting young man, and Louis watched with humorous tolerance, secure in possession and shrewdly aware that Llewelyn, in illness and loneliness, was painting with poetry an idealized image of the most attractive woman of his acquaintance.

Throughout the winter of 1912-13 he was continually ill at Montacute, fluctuations of temperature regularly reminding him of danger. Hope was sustained by memory of the Milan doctor's assurance that he might live for years if he 'gave up climbing mountains.' In the summer of 1913 he forsook the terrace-walk as a daytime resort, securing seclusion from the household routine by converting into his private den the apple loft over the stables. There his mother went to read to him in afternoons, and there, or outside the stable-door in the sunshine, he would read and write. Apparently he kept no diary during this year, probably because he was now writing definitely for publication. Many of the stories and sketches published ten years later in *Ebony and Ivory* were written at this time—"The Stunner," 'The Wryneck,' 'Spheric Laughter,' 'The Brown Satyr,' 'Un Mufle' (originally called 'The Snouted Pig'). The final 'Ivory' story 'Death'—in which he imagined, as he frequently feared, the death of John—was accepted by A. R. Orage for publication in the *New Age*, and his old Cambridge friend J. C. Squire, newly appointed literary editor of the *New Statesman*, discovered in Llewelyn one of the first of countless young writers to whom he gave early encouragement by accepting an extract from his diaries. His sister May, now embarked on her successful career as a lace-designer in New York, typed some of his stories, including 'The Stunner,' when she came home for the Christmas of 1913.

The hero of 'The Stunner' was a well-known village character at Montacute, and the story illustrates Llewelyn's habit of studying with shrewd and sympathetic interest the humblest of his father's parishioners. The incident inspiring 'The Food of Man' was recalled years later in *Love and Death*—how one day on the terrace-walk 'an awful crying, half-shriek and half-groan, a terrifying expression of a living creature's ultimate desperation' sent him hastening into the

road to witness the savage harrying by herdsmen of a terrified cow on its way to slaughter. Such a scene moved Coleridge to the allegory called *Recantation*, in which he saw the French Revolution as an ox hounded by harrying stupidity to madness. It moved Llewelyn to meditate on the 'unseemly sentiment' of conventional Christianity, on 'what scot or lot in the wide plan of redemption have oxen, the patient oxen of the fields who watched the birth of Jesus?'

During the summer the monotony of his life was diverted by the usual visitors to Montacute, and by his Cambridge friend Kemp, on leave from legal practice at Bombay. Under the influence of Dostoevsky he modestly thought of writing 'a minor novel,' but, as he confided to Louis, 'whether to write an aggressive exposition of the Paganism we love or a treatise on the disillusionment we believe in, I cannot determine.' Later, remarking that 'I cannot write anything that satisfies me,' he found it 'extraordinary how with the prospect of renewed health I feel perfectly prepared to undergo *the torments of life*.' Nevertheless, he now for the first time wore a beard, and John remarked twenty years later how Llewelyn 'always grows a great defiant buccaneer's beard when his illness makes a special effort to compel him to "cave in" '; he had been unable to shave during his illness at Milan, and during the autumn of 1913 he informed Louis Wilkinson: 'My latest extravagance is to grow a beard—it is now as it was at Milan.'

During such times when he felt better in health he visited Seaton to see Miss Sawyer and Canon Stuckey Coles, whose acquaintance he had sought with a letter of introduction from Louis Wilkinson, who had known Father Coles at Oxford, as principal of Pusey House. It cannot be argued that Llewelyn's dislike of priests as a species extended to individuals, or that his pagan opinions prevented his listening with interest and respect to arguments in defence of Christianity from apostles of personality. Dr. Price of Tintinhull remained his friend, he valued the affectionate friendship of his cousin Father Hamilton Johnson, to whom he dedicated *The Cradle of God*, and as he tells in *Damnable Opinions*, Stuckey Coles 'was a man I honoured.' It must have been late in November 1913, when he went to stay two nights with Canon Coles at Seaton, that the old priest wakened him one morning to watch the break of dawn. The window looked over the estuary of the river Axe, and as the wheeling gulls wailed 'their first forlorn cries' over the mud-flats and 'the sky became streaked with red,'

it came to me with conviction, with a certainty that has never since left me, that the true secret of life is braver, more happy than anything suggested by the punctilious altar at the back of this venerable old man's room.

At such moments he felt the more eager 'to undergo the torments of life,' but he felt scant enthusiasm for returning to teaching at Sherborne. As he grew stronger, his romantic craving increased, and desiring a more rewarding attachment than his hopeless infatuation for Frances, he created an illusion around the most attractive young woman within the narrow limits of his acquaintance. His cousin, Marion Linton, had been lately orphaned by the death of her mother following three years after her father's. Both John and Llewelyn had been devoted to their cousin Alice—some of her letters to Clavadel are copied into the diaries—and Llewelyn had known Marion since childhood. Now, during one of his spells of improved health, he visited her at her home with her aunts at Abingdon.

By nature shy, retiring, and reserved, she had found consolation in her loneliness from the counsel of a Roman Catholic priest. Her father, a country vicar of views as orthodox as Mr. Powys's, had no leanings to Rome, and her mother's family felt no little consternation and disapproval at her tentative proposal to enter the Roman Church. Naturally to Llewelyn's philosophy, it was appalling that a girl in the freshness of attractive womanhood should contemplate complete resignation of life's pleasures in the sterility of a nunnery. He exerted every effort to gain her allegiance from her priest, and it soon seemed that earthly love would triumph over sacerdotal sophistry, though she was already attending novitiate classes.

The diary for 1914—of the same half-crown sort as his sister Gertrude had given to him at Clavadel—is filled with copious quotations from books he was reading, Montaigne, Nietzsche, Napoleonic memoirs, and many of Shakespeare's plays. The first personal entry is on 2nd May:

Stood in a quarry on Ham Hill talking with Jack. 'If I got well, I should like to marry Marion Linton.' 'Marion Linton! why, I've never even heard of her.'

The pages of the diary become full on 8th June, when Marion Linton arrived on a visit to Montacute. He met her at the station and walked with her across the fields.

I was excited, eager. 'You must stay over Sunday—how unkind of you to put your classes before us.' She was embarrassed. I shall not forget her slanting glances, exquisite from under long eyelashes—how proud she looked!

To her remark 'Then probably I shall go into a convent,' he replied, 'I do not want you to do that,' and quoted, 'The best belongeth unto mine and me: and if it be not given us, then do we take it; the best food, the purest sky, the strongest thoughts, the fairest women!'

Next morning he waited impatiently for her to go for a walk.

Presently she appeared across the lawn in her peculiar shy rapid way. I had meant to take her to Kiss-me-down but Gertrude said the grass was too wet. Walked along Stoke Road—met Denman. 'This,' I said, 'is my lady.' Went into Stoke Church—dared not speak here for fear of the influence of God's altar. Went into the churchyard—dared not speak here because of the influence of the graves. Led her rapidly to a stile in Marsh Lane. Sunshine and buttercups were everywhere. Here at last I dared speak. 'If I get quite well, would I have a chance of marrying you?'

She hesitated and fenced. 'How long has this been going on for?' she asked, and 'what would become of my convent plan?' But as they walked back home from Stoke Wood—the scene of his first meetings with Dittany in *Love and Death*—she confessed, 'There is nobody else that I would marry but you,' and apologized for the oblique answer, 'I am afraid I am frightfully tiresome, being so vague.'

He recalled scenes from the days that followed when writing *Love and Death*. He describes his passionate kissing of Dittany at the stile in Marsh Lane, among the gold of sunshine and buttercups, as it was when he made his proposal to Marion. The day after the proposal he felt 'much more optimistic.'

Walked to Tintinhull with Marion. She was beautiful in a honeysuckle dress. I desired her and desired her and desired her. We wandered about Dr. Price's garden—picked roses for her, roses and honeysuckle. . . . We walked down White Horse Lane. I told Marion about Frances. I held her hand. We walked hand in hand along the lane, through the fields, and through Chilthorne Domer churchyard.

On 11th June, they 'walked to Odcombe and round by Five Ashes,' met the beggar-woman Betsy Cooper, 'and searched for our fortunes in her bible.' On the 12th when their walk led them through mud and water, he 'knelt and cleaned her shoes with wisps of green grass,' as he cleaned Dittany's in *Love and Death*.

His persuasions prevailed on her to stay over the week-end. On Monday the 15th it was Montacute Feast and together they were photographed, seated beside his father and sister Gertrude in the midst of the villagers grouped on the vicarage drive. Later the same day she went away, and on the Tuesday Llewelyn left for Seaton with his parents, staying at 7 West Cliff, the same lodging that he had shared with Miss Sawyer the year before. On the Thursday, after

picking violas and sending them to Marion, he 'went to meet Jack' and the diary's pages become blank.

John had just returned from a continental trip—to Spain with Louis and Frances Wilkinson, then to Rome with Bertie. He was 'tired and in pain' and unable to 'walk without feeling exhausted,' wrote their mother to their sister May in the second week of their stay. Llewelyn, she reported, was better, 'but he does not walk or bathe yet as he did the first week he was here.' Though after thirty years he could not recall whether they stayed at Seaton or Sidmouth, John remembered that he was 'down in health' and Llewelyn 'in good spirits.' An isolated entry in the diary on 27th June records:

Walked with Jack to the foot of the White Cliff. Clambered up a little way and then sat side by side on the cliff grass, warm and dry. Came back by the rocks paddling. I carried Jack's coat. After lunch I had discolouration.

The improved health of the previous autumn had not been sustained. Early in 1914 Willie had relinquished his four years' struggle at Witcombe to make a living as a farmer in England and emigrated to East Africa to manage a sheep farm owned by a syndicate. He now wrote to propose that Llewelyn should join him in the hope that the high altitude of Gilgil might cure his consumption. The decision was made at Seaton, for Llewelyn wrote in an undated letter from 7 West Cliff to his sister Katie:

I am writing to tell you that it is decided that I should sail from Southampton in the good ship *Burgemaester* on September the 1st. I am in high spirits about it, not only as it is a fresh adventure, but it also seems to offer me a new chance of getting quite well. However you must not think that I have not moments of sadness when I think of leaving the few people I really do care for—perhaps for many years.

After two years of inactivity at Montacute, making no real progress towards recovery of health, he welcomed the chance of a change of scene. Now Willie was gone from Witcombe, all the family save Gertrude was dispersed, and the few joyous summer weeks when the family and old friends re-united to revive the happy atmosphere of his boyhood scarcely compensated for the monotony of months in daily company with his ageing parents. Though his father denied him nothing in plans for his cure, now consenting to the African project as readily as to his Clavadel treatment, Llewelyn disliked the sense of dependence, and his sensitiveness, the more easily irritated in illness, often read implied reproach in his father's egotistical self-pity. After his father's consent to the trip to Venice in 1912, Llewelyn wrote:

I felt amazed with Jack for the ironic acquiescence with which it was his mood to receive Father's grave puritinal remarks. 'The great fault of the modern day is love of pleasure'—'I am not going to have any holiday'—etc.

Afterwards John remarked, 'I am a far greater egotist than you, far more subjective,' and explained that he always treated narrow egoists with irony, 'leading them on to see how far they will go—I never argue or try to change them.' Of such forbearance Llewelyn was constitutionally incapable; in pursuit of truth he would always argue and seek to convince. With his father, therefore, unaccustomed to contradiction and confirmed in the uncontested opinions of a lifetime, there was frequent friction, and his mother's compliance intensified resentment of his father's complacency.

'How wise it is to have a change, to see different scenes and different faces,' murmured his mother to Llewelyn in the train going to Seaton. It was the last holiday John and Llewelyn were to have with their parents. Several pages of the diary in early July contain pencilled lists of cutlery, clothes and linen for the African journey; another spell of closely written entries begins on 28th July.

At prayers I noticed that Mother was shivering—she could not keep her arms still. Father kept looking at her in a funny grave way, periodically giving utterance to grave sympathetic sighs. I began talking about the foxes hole—Mother gave me a look of gratitude. In the afternoon she came down to the terrace walk but she was still shivering. She put out her arms to the sun. 'I am cold,' she said, 'I am cold.' She sat a little way away with Gertrude. 'I am afraid of the spirits,' she said. It was the last time she read *Tom Jones* to me.

29th. . . . Mother had had a bad night. I went to her room after breakfast. 'I've had shivering fits and such aching, aching, aching.' She got up and came down as usual. While they were at lunch I sat with her in the study. 'If anything happens to me when you are away, you mustn't let Willie fret—you must tell him it's not very nice going on living and always pain.' I cried, and when Mother saw me, she looked at me in such a queer way—quite coldly, with an expression of surprise, almost of contempt. . . . Then I told her that, if I got well, I would marry Marion. 'You must always let her know exactly how you are,' she said. At night there were lights in the spare room.

30th. Mother was very ill. In the morning I came into the dining room window to find her sitting near the armchair with a dead look on her face. 'It is the complaint,' she said. Isobel (Bertie's small daughter) looked in, silent, half-frightened. Mother, in spite of her agony, smiled at her—a ghastly smile—the kind of smile that the dead give to the living. All through the day she was sick—sick with a horrible black sickness. In the late evening she fainted. When she came round she wanted to be taken to the spare room. Bertie carried her. 'What did the doctor say about my breathing? Etta, I am ill. I am very, very ill. I don't think I have ever been so short of breath in my life.' Then she fainted again and died. I was called in from the terrace walk. The house—how strange it was—silent, dismantled, with

open doors and windows. The door of Mother's room was open, but it was empty. I entered the spare room. Mother lay across the bed, her head supported by the nurse, her long white arms outstretched like those of a dead bacchante. I held her hands in mine—they grew colder and colder. By the time I left the room the old village women had already arrived. We went out into the garden to pick sprays of myrtle and bay and phloxes and lavender. I hardly slept at all. All through the night from my tent on the lawn I was always conscious of the silent lighted spare room.

In the first chapter of *Damnable Opinions*, 'Africa's Wisdom,' he relates how 'beyond the immediate clamour of my sensations I held to my steadfast belief in all objective reality that was and is and will be for ever'—how he marvelled at the miracle of his having been born from his mother's body as the result of an act of love—how he reflected on man's foolishness in refusing to recognize the true religion of worshipping life.

The diary continues on 31st July:

In the early morning I encountered Father with red eyes coming out of the room. They had layed her on the bed stark and stiff and straight out, with a handkerchief over her face. With what skill, with what nicety, has the human race learnt to deal with its dead. I lifted the handkerchief—her face was like hard yellow wax, immobile. Jack arrived in the late evening, wearing a schoolboy suit of black.

The next day:

Went into the spare room with Jack and lifted the shroud from the coffin. 'I don't call it beautiful. I call it ghastly. I don't think I've ever seen anything so tragic and full of sorrow as that face.' The mouth was open and we tried to arrange it. Jack tightened the handkerchief while I pressed up the chin, which moved easily, terribly easily. There rose a smell of mortality. For hours we could not get rid of it. We went into the kitchen garden to pick mint. 'It's the best simple,' says Jack, 'for taking away the smell of mortality.'

A few months later he wrote from Africa to John recalling this macabre scene. When John objected that, so far from being sensitive, Llewelyn's character was 'massive and tough,' he had in mind this tendency to discuss and dwell on the horrible. With his subjective vision, John's emotions ever dramatized every spectacle and situation; he could not follow Llewelyn in his determination to contemplate with objective detachment. John was impressed by Llewelyn's 'calm, poetical, wise, controlled description of that old chap's cancer' in *Love and Death*—'that crater of horror, of suppuration to me; & if I had described it, how I wd. have enlarged upon the Smell! But Llewelyn treats it calmly & humorously—not hysterically as I wd. have done.' John always felt the oppression of what he has called 'rupophobia'—a horror of the disgusting: 'horrors & repulsive

thoughts, disgusts & loathing, rush at me!' So, when once Llewelyn embarked on a detailed description of a Montacute neighbour's mental delirium, John put his fingers in his ears and shouted to him to stop. Yet Llewelyn could not bear to hear the screams of a rabbit in agony; when he had hurried to release it from a gin and relieve it from misery, his hands were seen to be shaking. His discussion of the horrible was inspired by his determination to contemplate every reality of life, by a desire 'to exteriorize and so exorcize what pained and shocked him.' Like Dostoïevsky, he believed that 'after all, one must tell the whole truth.' As John and Louis remarked of him at Venice, he 'Luluized' everything; every scene and incident was associated with personal emotions experienced in connection with them, and so the perfunctory record in the diary of his and John's attempt to arrange their dead mother's face recalled to him the mingled revulsion and anguish of those harrowing moments.

The funeral was on 4th August.

I watched the procession from the nursery window and then went down to the terrace walk. How solid the coffin was with its eight handles of brass! I heard the singing of the last hymn and hurried up to put the house in order—drawing up the blinds, opening the windows, and giving directions to Fanny Cole. Then I heard voices calling me. It was Jack and Katie, overcome by the vulgar impertinence of the last hymn—'Jesus lives no longer now'—sung by foolish indifferent school-teachers, unmindful of all that it meant, that countenance of tribulation which they were burying.

Throughout August most of the diary's pages are blank. There is no reference to the outbreak of war except some verses on 6th August:

Is it a purblind prank, O think you
Friend with the musing eye?

His views and John's on the international situation inclined them rather to be stoned with Bernard Shaw than to scream with the newspapers; in his last year of life, when Europe tottered on the verge of another disastrous war, he wrote: 'I always get into trouble in war time. I remember in 1914 when John and I were corrected by Littleton for talking, talking, talking in the Terrace Walk.'

For everybody it was the end of an epoch, but the realization was more immediately recognizable by the Powyses from the coincidence of their mother's death. Montacute could never be the same again. Though Llewelyn, as he relates in *Love and Death*, was moved by his father's desolation, he felt more than ever irritated by the old man's inclination to impose upon his sisters the same unquestioning def-

erence he had exacted from their mother. His departure came as a release.

The diary was regularly kept from 2nd September.

Theodore and Littleton arrived. Theodore went a walk with Father down Hodder's lane. I saw his straw hat disappear under the trees. Tom gave me a cheque for £10. We said goodbye. 'We shall meet in ten years.' 'I myself have no doubt of it,' he said and disappeared up the path by Willie's wood.

3rd.—Lay still all day in the terrace walk. Gertrude, Jack and Bernie and Theodore appeared and disappeared, and I all the time wondered whether I would get away safely. The moon at night shone clear over the apple trees. I drank medicine to stop discolouration.

4th.—Travelled up to London with Jack & Bernie. Slept at Chiswick in the little back garden. . . .

5th.—Motored to the docks. Emily gave me a tuft of white heather and was the last to see me off. I could not be bothered to wait. Jack kissed his hand at me and turned his back. A whore broke her scent bottle at my feet and with miserable flapping papers around me, I drifted down the Thames. . . . I leant over the stern of the ship and spoke to the round-faced jovial Capetown man. He said the Germans would never dare to sink a passenger steamer. In the evening Perseus was before, just as at Montacute. I looked at him and at the moon and thought of Marion, perhaps standing at the edge of this very river.

6th.—Kept fairly well. The sun was bright and shone clear on Beachy Head. The cliffs looked far away and gleaming, but I don't think I even wondered whether I should ever see them again.

CHAPTER SEVEN

African Exile

DURING the voyage Llewelyn diligently kept his diary. After the first day he had two 'miserable nights' of sea sickness: 'luckily my consumption seems for the moment quiescent, though one would have thought the perpetual sickness would have killed me.' He was maliciously delighted to observe that a colonial bishop was even more sick than he was, 'his pi bishop-of-London face more drawn than ever, as he passes by, affable and gaiterless.' Rising early on the fourth morning, he 'coughed and spat into the sea and saw once again blood,' but afterwards, apart from occasional depression when he suspected symptoms of recurring kidney trouble, he enjoyed the voyage with his usual zest. His charm inevitably won him the welcoming smiles of the other passengers, and though each night he 'thought of Marion,' he was soon flirting mildly and reading fortunes in feminine hands, as among the patients at Clavadel. One lady, he found, 'certainly fascinates me in a strange way,' and thought 'her lips perhaps the most sensitive that I ever saw in my life,' but some ten days later he reflected that 'perhaps after all' another had 'a more generous soul.'

Rabelais and Nietzsche were his stock reading, but he also read Kipling's *Jungle Book*, *King Solomon's Mines*, Whitman, Matthew Arnold's *Letters*, and *Lord Jim*—it was in 1914 that the publication of *Chance* brought recognition to Conrad. Passages from the diary were faithfully copied out in letters to John, as when he recorded his disappointment, on going ashore at St. Helena, at being unable to secure a carriage to take him to Longwood, and 'drifted up the main street,' finding it 'a desolate dilapidated place, with old black trots, dusty chickens, and lean cats everywhere.' There was a day when they were 'all excited by the appearance of a huge ship on the horizon'—'I certainly experienced momentary apprehension when I thought of being turned out in a small boat to get to land as best we could'—but 'it turned out to be British.' He interestedly watched the birds following the boat, and the same day as he first saw the Southern Cross—'an insignificant square of stars'—'an albatross appeared, a single albatross, and kept sailing after the ship with

beautiful owl-like curves.' Probably he thought of *The Ancient Mariner*.

Going ashore at Cape Town and scrutinizing a statue of Cecil Rhodes, he thought 'how absurd it looked with its black baggy breeches!' After visiting Durban, he amused himself by reading *Nicholas Nickleby*, 'one of the last books Mother read'; irritated by the interruption of a pretty girl's chatter, he reflected, 'Some women are created for embraces alone—they should never be permitted out of bed.' A male passenger so delighted him by remarking that, when selecting books to travel with, he would always take Stevenson's essays, that he exclaimed: 'Yes, they are excellent—they intensify one's consciousness of existence, of being on a lukewarm planet sailing round the sun in illimitable space.' Then he 'felt a bloody ass—I must learn not to expect understanding from some people.' He discussed religious disbelief with a Dr. Hearsey, who, telling him of his dangerous illness, said, 'It makes me angry now to think how much I suffered senseless, useless pain.' Coming upon the Roman Catholic church at Zanzibar, 'for Marion's sake I went into it, but there was no God there—of that I was sure.'

Reaching Mombasa on 16th October, he took the Uganda train.

All the afternoon we travelled up through dry scrub country. Now and then one caught sight of a negro with bow and arrows. I slept badly. Woke at early dawn with a bad headache—was cold and miserable. The engine burns wood fuel and it was pretty to see the myriad of sparks, like fireflies, dancing through the black night. In their transitory dancing and in their sudden extinction they reminded me of the fate of human beings, whose destiny is also to float hither and thither in a jungle. . . . As it grew light the train left behind the dry scrub country and began to cross great grass plains. . . . One saw many wild animals, hartebeest and buck and gazelles and zebras trooping along in line one behind the other. On every side in the far distance the plain was encircled by purple hills. Now and then the train stopped at stations and one looked out at queer black men, at Indians, at tin houses and at burning hot earth.

His arrival at Gilgil, as described in *Black Laughter*, with the night spent at the station and disturbed by the lion's visit to drink, was either imaginary or based on another occasion, for he was met at the station by his brother Willie and taken to a friend's homestead for the night, where, after supper, he lay in bed, happily talking with his brother.

'Too excited to sleep much,' he woke early, had a hot bath, and walked about sight-seeing before being driven out to Willie's house. The exertion and excitement proved too exacting, for though he

rested after lunch, he 'almost immediately began to feel a queer sinking sensation at the heart.' At once he was oppressed by fear that 'the place perhaps was too high for me.' He took no more exercise beyond a short walk with Willie, but 'when I came back I spat blood.' He was 'better after a good sleep,' but 'lay on the balcony all day,' looking over 'downlands, cornlands, and a garden full of coloured flowers.' He noticed that 'in the evenings it grows quite autumnal, and a mist hangs over the woods and barley-mows, reminding Willie and me of The Hill and other country at home.' At night he 'woke and listened in terror to the sounds of the jungle—what is going on out there in the green darkness?' In the second chapter of *Black Laughter* he recalls his fears at night, when 'the soul of Africa would become articulate.'

On 20th October the natives refused to bury a dead Kikuyu, who was 'stinking like a dead porcupine,' and Llewelyn watched Willie set fire to the hut in which the body lay—the scene described in the story 'Rubbish,' in *Ebony and Ivory*. On 10th November, when Willie shot a bullock for the natives' food, he witnessed such a scene as he incorporated into 'A Kikuyu Riot' in *Black Laughter*.

The natives crowded round it like black erect vultures, like hyenas. Presently we drove them away, and the Kikuyus, taking offence, went off, some fifty of them, to the ground in front of the Boomah. Here they sat in a circle and chanted songs, periodically beating their spears and swords on the ground. I watched them, sitting on a log and wondering what sort of a fellow their God Munga was. When we were giving out Posha a message came to say that the Kikuyus were fighting. Willie left me to finish and went out immediately. I made my way towards the huts. I heard a terrific noise and after a while saw Willie's figure amongst a crowd of naked savages. I gave him his rifle. Some of his old Boys were helping him to keep the others back, but frenzied niggers continually broke away, hurling their spears, waving their swords, and making a queer grunting noise. Some of them were seized with a kind of apoplectic fit. 'Hapana pigory Mzungu—Do not kill the white man,' Willie heard his pig boy say as one savage hurled himself in his direction. Eventually we appeased them by letting them have the skin of the bullock. I lay on the balcony with slight discolouration and temperature and could not believe I would ever get really cured.

For the first six weeks he was troubled by fluctuating temperature and frequent headaches. Sometimes he went walks with Willie; more often he lay on the balcony, reading Shakespeare and writing. He finished the 'Rubbish' story on 15th November; he wrote at least three other stories, one set in Venice, another 'The Letter of a Father,' and 'planned out a kind of autobiography.' In Willie's company he was always happy, as when they returned from an evening

ride and remarked 'how like the country looked to the Dorset landscape, to the part round Middle Marsh.' He found 'something extremely homely and pleasing about that return in the dusk, the red flames of a bonfire, the round native huts, the misty darkness.' But when not well enough to accompany Willie on his rounds, he desponded about his health and depression deepened on days when his writing was difficult. 'The chances are against my recovery,' he wrote gloomily to John on 12th December, and one day when he did not dare to walk far from fear of sending up his temperature, he noted almost with astonishment, 'For one hour was so depressed by something approaching ennui.' At first, with his inveterate interest in people, he keenly assessed the personalities of neighbouring settlers, but, as he wrote to John, 'these people one meets out here are not given to much thinking—literature, it is absolutely unknown to them, they ignore it.' Starved of stimulating conversation, when he and Willie spent Christmas with some friendly neighbours, in the afternoon he 'wandered away into the forest by myself—I wanted Jack—or some girl—I grow tired of these people.'

He found difficulty in adapting himself to the savagery of his surroundings. One evening he walked out to meet Willie:

The sky was darkened and night was coming on. Sat by the side of the road, looking across the valley, and then stood watching two native cows fighting. All the time I was conscious of a curious uneasiness—this country was so strange and alien, with its rocky escarpments, its hump-backed cattle and wild skeleton cedars.

He was always imaginatively aware of the unseen activity of the silent jungle. As he tells in *Black Laughter*, he could not long enjoy watching 'the humming-birds flitting about the petals of the coloured flowers,' as he sat on the verandah, before 'I would suddenly become aware that I was being looked at, that from behind the trellis, or from behind the bloom of a mammoth nasturtium, a haggard and very old chameleon was peering at me intelligently, cynically.' By day it seemed impossible to believe that danger lurked everywhere on the romantic green mountain slopes, 'yet well I knew that by the time I was eating my supper secure in my stone house a thousand sharp eyes would be peering through the rank verdure that grew on each side of those far-off lawns.'

Determinedly he strove to attune himself to circumstances. One day he found a cat panting miserably on the verandah, its hind quarters crushed.

The boys would not 'pigory' it. I got it a saucer of milk but it could not drink . . . it crawled on its front legs mewling. I tried to write my diary but could not. At last I compelled myself to kill it, flogging it with a heavy cedar stick. After a few blows it lay dead with its mouth a little open and its legs extended. I was reminded of the scene in the spare room. A mother's death or a tabby cat's death, it is the same.

A few days later:

I skinned and cured two little humming birds, but felt certain misgivings at having shot them—these brilliant honey-eaters who had lived so gaily amongst geranium petals in the sunshine. I must learn to be ruthless and more ruthless.

Next day, when Willie shot a white-breasted hawk, remembering his resolution, he spurned it as it lay on the verandah in its death agony.

'What, having a stretch?' I said, mocking it. I skinned it—Christ, what eye-balls.

A month later he himself shot a white-breasted hawk; when the natives brought it in, 'it was still alive, with large brown undimmed eyes.' 'Hapana pigory'—"don't kill it," said one native, and Llewelyn left them with the bird. Later he found them torturing it:

The Toto had cut a forked stick and was pinning the hawk's head to the ground. Masharia extended its wings and straightened its legs; he then parted the feathers on its back and began to skin it alive, laughing at the ineffectual struggles of the bird on feeling the knife. A strange sadistic lust took possession of me, amazing in its intensity. I also could have lolled and laughed there in the sunshine and skinned it alive. With the utmost difficulty I got myself to hammer its head with the end of a hatchet.

Reporting the incident to John he wrote, 'That's nothing, darling—only little Lulu.' He never forgot this sadistic emotion; most men of his class and culture would have striven in shame to banish it from memory, but it was characteristic of his insatiable appetite for sensations in ceaseless pursuit of truth that he recalled the incident as illustrating the narrow dividing line between savagery and the civilization of centuries. 'Evil is cruelty,' he wrote in *Glory of Life*; 'there is no other evil.' But 'Kill! Kill! Kill! that was what one had to do to keep in tune with the African rhythm.' Had he remained in England, Llewelyn's health would have exempted him from military service; but in Africa he shared a similar emotional experience with those of his sensitive contemporaries compelled into cold-blooded slaughter. Like them he knew that all human creatures, German or English, Turk or Japanese, were capable of such atrocities as propagandists embroidered to stimulate fear and hatred in the dim souls of suburban bourgeoisie.

At the end of November Willie was confined to the house by illness for a few days, and Llewelyn deputized for him in superintending the work on the farm. Thereafter it became his habit to lend a hand to anything required. The diary continued to the end of 1914; letters to John suggest that he began a diary for the new year. But in January Willie decided to volunteer for service in the East African Mounted Rifles. Already most of the younger settlers had gone. Now came news of a minor German victory on the German East African border, in which some of his friends were killed. Before he left in the first week of February 1915, it was arranged that Llewelyn should take his place as farm manager, beginning with the modest salary of eight pounds a month.

He accepted the position with no little dismay. As he wrote in *Black Laughter*:

I had come to Africa for my health, to avoid dying of consumption, and here was I about to be transformed into a planter pioneer, living on the outskirts of the world. An existence that had seemed tolerable with my brother always at hand in the case of emergency might well, I felt, grow insupportable when alone.

All his 'Powys caution,' which he himself decried as timidity, revolted both on his brother's account and his own. 'I am filled with horrible misgivings, with horrible sadness,' he told John, and afterwards confessed:

I felt extremely reluctant to have him involved in this crazy contest, so destructive of the body-politic of civilization. I was well aware of the obstinate stupidity of the various Governments and of their culpable carelessness with regard to the magnanimous youthful spirits they held in their power. These generals, these colonels, in their spick-and-span uniforms, with the confined brain-pans of a set of strutting poultry, how could one feel any confidence in such people?

For himself, he had depended on Willie's careless competence to cope with the dangerous excitements of their daily life; his imagination boggled at contending alone with a Kikuyu riot, at confronting with his rifle an infuriated leopard precariously caught in a roughly improvised trap. As he had dramatized his first knowledge of his illness, so now he magnified his horror at his brother's impending departure. In the seventh chapter of *Black Laughter* he described his 'uneasy persistent feeling of personal loss,' his nostalgic longing for the familiar scenes of boyhood, for the 'secure, solitary, unchanging life' at Montacute, his 'almost comic fear of the sounds of the jungle as he went for water to the tank behind the house before going to bed:

I could hardly wait for my glass to fill; even the shadows that the clumps of geraniums threw upon the long uncut grass seemed treacherous, menacing. I slept with a loaded gun at my bedside.

With the morning sun he 'felt in better heart.' He helped Willie to saddle his mule, reflecting that 'he might have been a cavalier in the old days, so strange and alien an occupation it seemed.' To John he wrote a cheerful account of Willie's departure, remarking of himself with fatalistic resignation:

I can't yet predict anything as to my health. I still expectorate pretty freely in the morning, but so far have had no discolouration. It is very odd finding myself in a responsible position again. I pray I shall be guided to do what's right.

The sudden access of responsibility left him no leisure to think of his health or fears of the jungle. Careless of how 'my consumption will be affected,' he found himself 'marching about from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. without being overtired.' Utterly ignorant of farming, he had to use his native shrewdness and what information he gleaned from visiting settlers. He had always understood that salt was necessary to all animals, but when a deadly sickness overtook the pigs, he discovered that salt was poison to them, and cured them by ordering the swineherd to keep his charges away from the cattle-lick.

His 'Powys caution' inspired perpetual worry about possible disaster. 'You can guess with what precision I would store my granary with grain so that I should not run out when the seed time comes,' he wrote to John. 'You can guess the absurd precautions I take against this or that contingency.' Often he fell asleep with thoughts absorbed in 'agricultural problems—about acres or loads.' One night he forgot to take his helmet, and next day was 'reminded of Milan by painful penis and bladder sensations,' so that he wondered if 'one of my kidneys is rotting and festering with tuberculosis.' In this mood he desponded about Willie: 'Of course he's just the kind of person to be shot and sometimes I feel as if the cloud was over him and he knows it. What irony if I with all my cowardice and egoistic pre-occupation survive and he is killed.'

Just as he had settled capably to his unexpected lot, Marion Linton wrote in July breaking off their engagement as she had finally decided to enter a nunnery. If his vanity had been piqued, he had obvious excuse; though caution and circumstances had alike deterred him from amorousness, women had always shown themselves susceptible to his charm. But it was characteristic of his intellectual habit that he felt the shock rather as a rebuff to his philosophical persuasions

than in any sense of personal humiliation. At first he wrote to John with resignation:

Marion I have let go without any very devastating emotion, a mild and not unpleasant melancholy has for the last week given colour to my days. . . . But mind you, brother, if I could even now snatch her away I would, and I shall certainly make a point of telling her that the fleabane is out in Kiss-me-down lane if I ever get back to England in the summer.

Shrewdly his lucid mind contemplated the psychological possibilities leading to her decision. Justly he reflected, 'If I had been there I do not think it would have turned out so.' But he had accepted the condition that their marriage depended on recovery of his health, and his search for health had sent him to Africa. He had never relaxed in effort to wean her away from the priestly influence. 'I long to get her away,' he noted in his diary, 'and make her gay and wicked.' He wrote to her of his poetic faith and pagan delight in nature; in the previous November she had written that, on his advice, she was 'going to read some more Nietzsche. . . . I think of you always. I am longing for the three years to come to an end.' He felt that he had erred in seeking to convince her by argument as he had convinced Wilbraham at Clavadel; 'I have been too frank and have written to her just what came into my head.' Bitterly he imagined how 'the priest used to read these papers lying under a crucifix and she at his bedside was led further and further from me . . . the moribund priest who from his deathbed has put out emaciated Catholic arms and ravaged her soul.' He determined that 'no circumstance will ever persuade me to forgive the church after this.'

Only after the first smart of defeat by the priest had abated did he reflect on his personal loss. 'What demons these Catholics are,' he wrote in September to John, 'but it wasn't quite fair. You see I was far away at the time and she forgot me.' And three weeks later:

I have so to speak effaced her from the tablets of my memory. I have been compelled to do this. I feel that my part in this affair has been rather a ridiculous one: I did not, I confess it, expect to be let down in this way. I know very well the aspects of her face which are unpleasing. I used to observe them in the buttercup fields but there were many other things to be said in her favour. *She was my choice.* I don't think I shall marry anyone else. I think I shall never marry but live a solitary and lively and selfish life in Tangiers.

Half-humorously he sought to conceal even from John his realization of the revolution this disappointment had effected in his plans. The old life at Montacute was gone; he had accepted exile in Africa as a

necessary prelude to recovery of health and marriage with Marion. Now he was condemned to desolation in this wilderness at least for duration of war, with nothing beyond to look forward to—nothing but reunion with John.

Throughout the arduous monotony of the three following years he was sustained by ardent anticipations of joining his life to his eldest brother's. He hoped that John would visit him in May 1916, but by then the submarine menace precluded any but essential travel. He had no time to write; all day he laboured at the distasteful drudgery of the farm and rolled into bed at night drugged by exhaustion. He had sent to John the unfinished autobiography he had planned in his first weeks at Gilgil, together with his diaries, from which John was to select extracts to complete the narrative. 'I hope you have censored my confessions and cut out anything insipid,' he wrote on 11th October, 1915: 'My diaries! be careful not to lose them. I never write diaries now, I am occupied with bulls and rams instead.'

Few weeks passed without his writing to John, whose letters were his link with the life he longed for, an oasis of human feeling in the desert of soul-stifling toil.

I work on here but I have moments . . . when my immediate surroundings fill me with a certain weariness; this lack of large terrace-walk-hours of leisure, the perpetual application to work, has its disadvantages. The more I master the intricacies of farming the less interesting it becomes. But I shall no doubt go on at it for many years.

He assured John that Marion's defection had not detracted from his resolution to get well.

I must have more courage, I must have more resolution, I must live. I must outlive the war. I must have girls and many girls and wander through June fields again, and write diaries, and all this after I have made my fortune out of farming sheep.

If he ever seriously believed in the possibility of making much money from farming he soon lost the illusion, but he had hopes of regaining his health by perseverance in the African climate. On 23rd October, 1915, he wrote:

What a way of wasting our time this business of *work* is. But I must get cured if it takes seven years. I suppose when I remember last year I may consider myself better: but I keep spitting still and I still now and again wake up with discolouration.

He was to leave Africa uncured of consumption—probably his strenuous life gave him no fair chance of a cure—but during four years he was never once confined to his bed.

The lambing season of 1915 seemed a nightmare, as he described to John in a letter of 7th November.

I have been busy lately burning off lamb's tails with hot irons. I am not very deft at the operation and often get roundly cursed by Cole. . . . I cannot cut off the tails of lambs with sureness—my arm aches, my hand shakes, I am terrified of severing them too long or too short, I am terrified of burning these little symbols of salvation and I have heard them, I can tell you, utter their Lama Sabacthani under this hot iron treatment. The thing gets on my nerves, 'tis like teaching French at Broadstairs or lecturing in the Bowery. I have moments of intense misery when I want to be ill again and be lying for long intervals with my mother reading to me *Tom Jones*—Mother!

Yet, as he related in *Black Laughter*, the lambing season was preferable to the stinking process of dipping sheep to prevent scab. With fourteen thousand head to care for, he 'came to hate these animals, with the round woolly backs and obstinate selfish mouths.'

The farm for which I was responsible was one of the largest and wildest in the country. It was a stock farm of thirty thousand acres, which afforded grazing for two thousand head of cattle and fourteen thousand sheep. The hut in which I lived was built of wattle and daub, and resembled an Irish cabin. It had two doors, a mud floor, and three apertures which served as windows. I used to breakfast under the shadow of a rough grass roof, and from where I sat I could look out upon the lake.

Often 'for weeks together' he saw only black faces.

I saw little of the neighbouring settlers. My life became reduced to one unending struggle with the material world. To deal with it at all required enormous concentration of energy. My mind alone remained free. . . . Riding along great valleys with a hundred eland before me, riding across wide open clover-grown plains with ostriches zigzagging out of my way, my mind still retained its accustomed detachment.

His little intercourse with the white settlers, so far from affording recreation, served only as an irritant reminder of his isolation. When he journeyed to Nairobi to see the dentist, he met many people, 'most of them with heads made of concrete,' and he wrote to John, 'I quite long to get back to Cole—he at least has a hawk's brain.'

His employer, the Hon. Galbraith Cole, inspired rather the same fascination as he had felt for Dr. Zsenda on first going to Clavadel. 'I have never in my life had to deal with so strong a character,' he told John: 'He has Spanish blood in his veins and he reminds me often of those stately gentlemen we used to read about in *Westward Ho!*' Often during the daily toil Llewelyn suffered under the lash of his tongue, for outside in the stockyards he would behave 'like a vicious

high bred horse or like some f—— aristocratic snake;’ he would waste no words on an offending native but knock him down with a blow of his fist in the face, while Llewelyn felt ‘like a little school-boy, hardly daring to look up from my work.’ Even in such circumstances, Llewelyn could admire his employer’s initiative, self-reliance, and coolness in confronting any crisis; when an outbreak of plague, conveying infection by the breath or touch, created devastating mortality among the natives, Llewelyn observed that Cole was ‘quite indifferent to the danger,’ though he humorously confessed his own trepidation. But out of working hours Cole provided his overseer with his sole resort for intellectual conversation. Though he had an autocrat’s attitude towards the working masses and shared none of Llewelyn’s liberal ideas, he had a taste for reading and for incisive debate.

Cole is a great satisfaction and consolation to me. He may be as hard as flint and as crafty as a snake, and cold as ice, but by Jove he has a brain and one can say anything to him, and he will switch his brain on to it and ferret it out. He has more intelligence than anybody else in East Africa and more distinction of mind. He will discuss after our manner, and if he was not a Spaniard with a heart of an inquisitionist, he would be a very delightful and illuminating companion.

Llewelyn found it ‘a relief in this country to be able to talk to a man and to say anything that comes into your head,’ and Cole recognized the taste and judgment of his unusual manager by commissioning Llewelyn, during a slack spell in February 1916, to select a library for him at a cost of seventy pounds.

Sundays afforded Llewelyn’s only leisure. If no news came in ‘of thieving, or sick cattle, or lost sheep,’ he was able to spend Sunday morning reading. He read ‘every line of Shakespeare three times over,’ resorted often to Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and pondered ‘every word that Matthew Arnold had ever written.’ ‘Most restorative’ he found ‘the long urbane civilised sentences’ of Arnold’s prose, ‘prose that kept alive in me the happy knowledge that life contained other concerns than a fretting preoccupation with material gain.’ He delighted in reading and re-reading John’s books—for John had at last, at forty-three, begun to produce evidence of the genius his friends had so long believed in, and characteristically, after stagnating for years with his promised *Life of Keats*, now burst into a spate of creative work, publishing provocative comment in *War and Culture*, critical essays in *Visions and Revisions*, poetry in *Wolf’s Bane*, his first long novel *Wood and Stone*, and a first draft of his later

astonishing autobiography in *Confessions of Two Brothers*. While John's other books were published in New York by his American manager, G. Arnold Shaw, the *Confessions* came from the Manas Press, which was controlled by Claude Bragdon, who, in the story of his many-sided artistic career, *The Secret Springs*, has told how he met John when he was lecturing at Rochester and how John, in order to swell Llewelyn's slender confessions sufficiently to fill a book, supplemented them 'with one of those long essays in introspection at which he was a past master.' Bragdon described Llewelyn's contribution, 'though bordering on the macabre,' as 'brilliantly done, with touches of mordant humour deliberately calculated to shock the puritanical.'

'This business of the publication of our confessions gives me extraordinary satisfaction,' wrote Llewelyn on 6th February, 1916: 'It is just and right that ours should appear together.' But three weeks later, regretting that Willie's enlistment had prevented his persevering with the autobiography, causing it to be supplemented by extracts from his diaries, he wished he 'had taken more trouble,' and when Arnold Shaw published Theodore's *Soliloquy of a Hermit*, he expressed hopes that John would persuade him to issue a volume of his own carefully written stories. But these, like Theodore's novels, were to wait another seven years before an enterprising publisher produced them in book form. On receiving Theodore's book in the following April, he wrote:

I cannot tell you how highly I think of it. It may be that our confessions will be more popular at first, but I agree with the marquis* when he says you will be still read in far off future days. This book at one stroke puts you beyond half the great ones of the earth—with this in your pocket you can challenge the world. Cole reads it continually and says he senses in its pages a most sensitive and super refined soul.

John's confessions he thought 'a little too inhuman, a little too analytic . . . too modest . . . too subjective,' and asked, 'What is all the coil about not loving yourself!' He wryly deprecated mis-readings and alterations of his own manuscript; he was made to

* In *Blasphemy and Religion: A Dialogue about John Cowper Powys' 'Wood and Stone' and Theodore Powys' 'The Soliloquy of a Hermit,'* by Louis U. Wilkinson, M.A., Litt.D. (G. Arnold Shaw, New York, 1916), a marquis and his son discuss the respective merits of John's novel and Theodore's reflections. Contrasting John's 'sensationalism' with Theodore's 'valid experience,' the marquis asserts that, while the novel is 'a blasphemy' and 'as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal,' 'they'll be reading *The Soliloquy of a Hermit* in a hundred years.'

describe 'rabbits' instead of 'pierrots' at Sidmouth as 'pirouetting, fantastically silhouetted against the Atlantic,' and 'some women are created for embraces alone—they should never be permitted out of bed' was modestly cut to 'some women are intended for embraces alone.'

Otherwise I am quite pleased with my few pages, and I think they read well. I should have liked to have had them longer, to have composed them at home and really been able to have time to fill 'em in. So I would if I had known they were going to come out so pat.

While he thus regarded his first book with balanced modesty, he derived from it sufficient self-confidence to assert that 'I am by nature a writer, a man-of-letters, and not a sheep farmer.'

His main criticism of *Wood and Stone*, in a letter of 16th January, 1916, reflected the reproach that he frequently repeated against John's prodigal fluency in later years. 'Most of the mistakes in it are insignificant and the direct result of writing at top speed without me at your side to read and revise and point out petty details.' He found flaws in the portrait of himself as Luke Anderson. 'Making Luke marry I am sure is a blunder—a blunder which hits me personally,' and he regretted the airy Luke's partiality for 'elegant canes'—'flimsy, irrelevant, and depressing objects' beside his own habitual ash sticks. The 'elegant canes' were an injustice, but certain affectations of manner, assumed to screen want of self-confidence in youth and utterly absent in the mature man, were satirized by Louis Wilkinson in his caricature of Llewelyn as Cyprian Strange in *The Chaste Man*. Llewelyn himself acknowledged their existence. 'One became conscious of his too expensive boots, and his becoming impertinence,' he wrote to Louis after reading the novel in February 1918: 'I suppose you are right there—damnation.'

He read and re-read *Wood and Stone*, lent it to Cole for his opinion, and told John that it 'made me very homesick for you.' While his body laboured six days a week at the work of the farm, he maintained a life apart in his mind, fed and fostered by his correspondence with John and his reading on Sundays. His life in Africa was a bare existence to be endured before living could be resumed in John's company. 'When shall we meet again?' he wrote in August 1916: 'All my days are as nothing till then.' Sensing the subsequent success of *Black Laughter*, John advised him to write 'stories with local colour'; Llewelyn replied, 'You do not understand that I have no time, not a moment throughout the whole day.' By August 1916

he believed that 'few men would excel me now as a manager of a stock farm out here, but what weariness, what concentration, what diabolic energy it requires.' The mystery and savage magnificence of the dark continent appealed to his poetic sense, and with leisure on Sunday mornings to 'lie an extra hour in bed drinking China tea and smoking a rare Egyptian cigarette,' he felt some of his joy in the Dorset and Somerset countryside while contemplating 'the green lucerne in the garden and the dry sunburnt plains and great blue mountains in the distance . . . if it wasn't for this business of work I think even in Africa one would experience ecstasy, but you know what it is—sheep lost, cattle dying—how can one hold one's mind receptive distracted by such concerns!'

His zest in life procured alleviations even in durance. *Black Laughter* reveals his quizzical interest in the personalities of the natives, whom most settlers regarded merely as necessary utensils of labour. Though, apart from Cole, he could find no affinity to any of the settlers, he could respect and humorously appreciate such characters as the Dutchman with the big boots in *Black Laughter*, who unconscious alike of fear and incongruity, furiously kicked into intimidation a leopard that was mauling his dog—'Ach! ach! dat great cat, he dought to eat my poor dog, eh? I vish, Mister Powys, dat he had stayed for me to give him *von more goat booting*.' With shrewd amusement he entertained the millionaire big-game hunter, Paul J. Rainey; 'a selfish man, a superficial man, a commonplace man, he was, if I am not much mistaken, haunted all his years by something wild and beautiful in the varied life he loved so much to destroy.' He recognized that Rainey was one of those men of undeveloped mind, so common in cricket pavilions, regimental messes, and rural district councils, whose highest happiness 'was in its essence identical with that of the simplest farm boy, whose joy it is to dig out badgers in a midnight copse.'

He found pleasure in pets. In his first weeks in Africa he kept a pet monkey, which he nursed with tender distress in an effort to save its life from poisoning. Later, as he tells in *Black Laughter*, he brought up a baby baboon, whose mother he had killed, who learnt to greet his homecomings with 'a flow of welcoming talk, burying his head against me,' and from whom he felt sad pangs at parting when he left Africa. He grew fond of his two Arab horses, Ramadan and Rosinante. In *Black Laughter* he tells of the death of Willie's terrier on the tusks of a wart-hog, and he himself made a companion

of a dog called Egypt, 'half wolf hound, half boar hound,' given to him by Berkeley Cole, Galbraith Cole's younger brother.

For a year the image of Marion Linton distracted his mind from casual sensual urges, but after her defection he became again tormented by consciousness of his fast vanishing youth unfulfilled by sexual experience. The few white women he saw were staid or unattractive, and he frequently cast lustful glances upon lissome native girls—as once when he witnessed a dispute between two natives over a girl wife, 'what matter though her buttocks were velvet black instead of velvet white.' Often temptation surged recklessly up to take one of these willing girls to his bed, and freely confessing his feelings to John, he sometimes wrote of temptation as definite intention. When three new Kikuyu girls arrived, 'I shall perhaps select one when I come back from dinner tonight,' he wrote, and he described the allurements of 'a little bibi with a very slender figure and a quaint roguish face.' Such remarks evoked austere reproof from some reviewers of his published *Letters*, but even if temptation was undeterred by natural taste, it was frustrated by 'Powys caution.' 'I haven't had any dalliance with black women,' he wrote to Louis Wilkinson in March 1915; 'two of them have attracted me rather, but the Pox is so extraordinarily prevalent that I am scared.' In *Ebony and Ivory* the story 'How It Happens' portrays the tragic consequences of a single lapse by a sex-starved young man. No callow youth, Llewelyn was well aware of the prevalence of venereal disease among the natives, and the prudence which had prevented acceptance of the invitation from the attractive cocotte at Arosa could hardly be upset, even in lonely tedium, by the blandishments of barbaric black women.

In the autumn of 1915, during the first months of desolation after his broken engagement, yearning for consolation and callous with self-pitying resentment, he sought a measure of vicarious satisfaction in sterile caressing of native girls, such as he had enjoyed with Jenny at Clavadel. To Louis Wilkinson he had always confided such episodes, probably with embellishments calculated to excite from Louis the rich laughter he loved so well, and a letter at this time, published in *Welsh Ambassadors*, describes his entertainment of a laughing naked native girl, how he 'kissed her ebony body—the smell of it was excellent, like the interior of some old & precious box found in the Sultan's attic at Zanzibar'—and how 'she kept begging me to have her.' To John, too, he wrote in December 1915 of 'a new little

black maiden,' who 'had just been brought up to the verandah' so that he might decide 'whether to have her tonight or another who is being fetched from Gilgil'; he remarked with approval her 'very slender ankles' but 'did not like a certain calling look in her eyes.'

After these months he was rarely even tempted. To John he wrote of his weariness at the insensibility of the native:

I am satiated with them—'it's necessary to have a whip with you when you go to one of them?' and I am not fond of whips or good at the wielding of them. Their maidens even weary me—their old trots would, if they could, pox me.

To Louis in August 1918:

I care nothing for these black women. They are lovely black gazelles, but they are too innocent. They are physically expert enough but one cries for more intellect and more soul.

The same sense of frustration pursued him as in the past. He required romance to garnish the attraction of sex; lust, without tenderness, was not enough. There is no evidence that he ever enjoyed such an idyll as that with the beautiful native girl Wambo, described in the fifteenth chapter of *Black Laughter*. Perhaps she was no more than an African Dittany; perhaps momentarily he did in fact, under the influence of natural beauty as the hot sun made shifting shadows in the forest glades, dally with the notion of forever resigning hope of escape from African bondage and solacing himself with a native wife. In either case he felt the urgent call of romance and allowed its play upon his imagination as he afterwards wrote in the story of Wambo.

The war went on and release seemed as remote as ever. On his birthday in 1916 he wrote to John:

God! how the darling little war persists. I am wanting to leave this damned country and come to you. Day after day goes by and I hear no word from Willie and I see no prospect of release coming.

On 5th November following:

How the war lingers on and on. I shall certainly come to you at the earliest opportunity—the only things that might stand in my way are (I) My fear of press gangs if the war continues (II) the necessity of Willie's having a holiday if the war ends (III) my lust for money. The last I guess is not a very dangerous temptation.

After another thirteen months, on 23rd December, 1917:

The war goes on . . . shot and shell, thunder and lightning, little Lulu buries his head under wool bales and hopes that some time some day he will be able to emerge upon a civilised world.

In the remoteness of East Africa he could retain a balanced judgment about the war impossible to any save a handful of enlightened and persecuted outcasts in England; to him it remained the criminal lunacy of inept politicians, men of limited minds driven frantic by fear. To Theodore he wrote in June 1918:

The anomaly of war at this stage in our civilization is clearly seen by the importance which becomes necessarily attached to work, to action—to constructing a tank and carrying a bayonet effectively. Tanks should be constructed in the mind—such tanks would really avail the human race—religion, poetry, philosophy—these things only are of use.

He was full of foreboding when his brother Bertie went to France, and relieved to hear of his being taken a prisoner of war. When John returned from America to England, he was rejected by the army as Theodore had been, on account of his health. Louis Wilkinson assured Llewelyn that he would be rejected as unfit for service, but his distance from the scene of hysteria did not blind him to bureaucracy's potentialities for fatuity, and he replied that, though Louis might be right, he had 'not the smallest intention of going anywhere near England while the war is on,' adding, with imaginatively shrewd appraisal of the popular feeling stimulated by propagandists like Horatio Bottomley, 'Anyhow I could not stand the eyes of the populace at Yeovil town station.' Though he grudged each month of life wasted in distasteful work, he was resigned to waiting for release till the end of the war, for 'if I move, I should be forthwith, I know, popped into a snug trench.'

But he could not have left if he would. Cole had other interests claiming attention besides the farm, and Llewelyn had to hold his post till Willie's return. '*I am caught*,' he told John in September 1917:

The burden of this vast farm lies on me alone; there is no other man within five miles of me. I cannot let the thing go until there is someone to take my place. I have an idea peace is not far off, but even then I see no prospect of seeing you for another year. Lions are here again, stampeding cattle and generally giving trouble. I have managed to kill two in a trap I set over a dead zebra. . . . What wit! what ape-like cunning for me, a scurvy philosophic coward who fears a personal encounter. . . . Two stations up the line there has been a settler murdered at midnight by natives—sometimes when I sit alone at night amid all these innumerable black men I think this may be my end—but no, I shan't escape consumption for nothing. I have other work to do.

He lost his solitary source of intelligent companionship when Galbraith Cole returned to England in the autumn of 1917, and his

mood was the more sombre from anxiety about John, who, after another dangerous operation for stomach ulcer, suffered frail health for some time afterwards. 'What an amazing thing if you do recover—if you are permitted a few years after this second operation,' wrote Llewelyn, adding, with his old dread of John's death:

More likely I am to hear you are dead, the cable coming to me as this last did, as I rode out in the hot plains, a slim paper in a pink envelope. You will never be able to *appear* to me out here—you would lose your way—though there are moments when a soul could well appear—in the loneliness of the high noon at night, when the silence is audible, and the revolving of the planet can be heard when I sit by the fire with Robert Blair's 'Grave' in my head and I seem to have been born alone with only black men about me. . . . Can you possibly survive till I can reach you? I fear not, I fear I am even now writing to a dead man. . . . What shall I be in this world without you? Will the insatiable, unconscionable love of existence come to my rescue? Will I still be glad that I have escaped consumption and have the world to bustle in?

But in spite of despondence, he sustained himself with hopes for the future, so that, during his darkest hours of anxiety for John, he remarked, 'It is funny, I keep writing to you as if you were well as ever, you may be dead or mad for aught I know.' In the monotony of labour and loneliness he felt the necessity to escape despair, to plan beyond the present wretchedness of dullness and drudgery. Once the war was over and Willie re-established, he would join John in America and earn his living by 'writing for the papers.' He had no doubt of his calling to write—and with reason, for his letters in these years reveal a growing certainty of mastery in expression. His bondage was not without reward; Cole had recognized his value as a farm manager by gradually advancing his salary from the original eight pounds to thirty pounds a month. He had proved to himself his capacity for earning a living as well as another. The period of immaturity, when he mistrusted his ability to succeed in any undertaking and continually sought confirmation of his convictions, was in the past. With a head 'silvered already with grey hairs,' he was a man of settled purpose and matured philosophy.

'It was in Africa,' he wrote in *Love and Death*, 'that I consolidated my philosophy.'

I remember well, as I rode in Africa on Ramadan, meditating in my heart crafty conclusions. The wind in a man's face makes him wise. . . . At the most the years left to me would not be as many as the autumn apples in an orchard sack. Let me then with the utmost deliberation treasure and measure out the days that still remained, holding myself aloof from the crowd's illusions, and let me be, at need, more strictly controlled than the most starched moralist; that is, though able to

give myself utterly to every indulgence when chance offered, able, no less, to be master of myself at a moment's notice when such discipline was called for; emulating not only the luxurious extravagances of Nature, but her austerity, her chastity also.

He had been out tailing lambs in the early morning, 'when, because of the cold, the animals would not lose so much blood,' and returning for breakfast, rode behind a startled herd of galloping zebra. Then it was that he saw clearly that 'Nature wears no disguise.'

Life upon earth requires qualities of the most contradictory kind. It requires the stoutest heart, the slyest wits, and the nimblest heels. Those who are worthy to be told the truth should be told it; the rest should be deceived at every chance without scruple or remorse. . . . Virtue and chastity that are won at the price of twisting our natures are in no way superior to degrading vice. . . . Morality must be purged of its last claim to divine sanction. It must be recognised for what it is, a pragmatic system of social accomodation varying with the customs of each epoch, and of each race. There is no pity in the clouds. . . . Always we must mind earth affairs, mistrusting those men and women whose God is in the skies. . . . Many are the rascals who study to improve our morals and make our lives less honest. There is no absolute morality; all is relative and each separated circumstance is like no other that ever was. There is no immortality. There is no God either! The recognition and acceptance of these denials are the beginning of all wisdom. Only so can we hope to become generous enough, humane, honourable, and happy enough to lay the firm foundations of a Utopian existence here on earth.

It was the philosophy he preached and expanded in all his writings, and specifically in *Impassioned Clay*, *Glory of Life*, and *Damnably Opinions*. Recognizing, as he wrote in *Now that the Gods are Dead*, that 'always it is the unmoral, sceptical, bright, glancing intellect that advances civilisation,' he devoted all his eloquence to defiance of prejudice and unpopularity in propagating the gospel of that 'poetic faith' in which he saw the sole ultimate salvation of humanity.

The trials of his last year of exile were calculated to test and confirm his philosophy. In Africa, as in news of the war, he witnessed the prodigality of human suffering; it was evident that no benevolent deity, whether the *Muúngu* of the Kikuyus or of other denomination, directed men's destinies, equally in the mass murders of the European battlefields as in the devastation wrought by plague among the negroes.

Black men died and white men died and their flesh went into the bellies of hyenas, their bones remaining on the veldt for a week, a month, perhaps, to be at length either covered up by weeds or scattered abroad in the wind, so that no one might say whether or no their souls lived.

In England, 'with the holly tree standing outside the kitchen window

year after year, with the baker bringing bread to the back-door day after day,' the system of civilization has so created a sense of safety that 'it is easy to acquiesce in the illusion of man's regulated life.' So in the security of Montacute Llewelyn had doubted the conclusions of his own lucid mind, conflicting with the accepted superstition of centuries. But 'in Africa the compromises of human society are shown to be artificial. . . . It is no longer possible to be fooled.' Life was too short for its precious minutes to be wasted in disagreeable, unrewarding labour. To Theodore he exclaimed in June 1918:

What madness this business of work is! I tell you when once I get safe away I will never *work* again, no not for a day.

The closing chapters of *Black Laughter* vividly relate the agonies of an African drought.

The last year of my stay in Africa was terrible. Famine stalked through the land with Pestilence galling his kibe. Week after week the country lay prostrate under the blank stare of a soulless sun. Month after month the waters of the lake sank lower and lower. . . . It was as though the earth itself was undergoing some appalling process of putrefaction. The air was tainted, the flaked dusty mould stank.

Everywhere lay 'carcasses of animals dead from exhaustion . . . with long muddy tongues protruding,' and 'the vultures grew plump as Michaelmas geese.' Cole, returned from England, was laid up with dysentery; alone Llewelyn coped with the diseased and distracted natives, the daily sick and dying stock. Examining the insides of cattle dead of rinderpest, 'I note their lungs and kidneys and wonder whether mine will last out and give me time—a few years to reap the reward of my labours.'

The armistice of 1918 brought no immediate relief. 'Willie does not return, Cole does not get well,' he wrote to John on 22nd December. 'I am tired, very tired. It will never be able to be said that I have not known work.' But in January 1919 Willie secured his discharge from the army, and looking at 'the soiled, parched grazing grounds,' he counselled immediate removal of the stock to uninfected soil. Together the brothers rode behind the surviving herds and flocks to plains nearly a hundred miles to the north. Before they left, it was arranged with Cole that Willie should take Llewelyn's place as manager at twenty-five pounds a month—five less than Llewelyn had been receiving—with a prospect of eventually sharing in the farm. Willie declined to return to England till he had estab-

lished himself, and Llewelyn felt 'something of a cad leaving him here and returning home *first*.' But 'I could not say I would stay,' he told John. 'I'm weary beyond words with this toil.'

On 1st March, 1919, he was free 'after four years and one month of this darling sheep farming,' and on the 2nd—'Willie's birthday'—he wrote to John:

For four years I have struggled under it without one single hour dedicated to my own desires; you know how I have inherited that incapacity to enjoy myself while there remains anything to be done and there has been every hour of the day something to be done. The few harmonious hours have always carried with them the sense of a weighty responsibility behind. . . . I am nominally free now but I don't feel free and it will be a long time before the bundle of burden has been rolled far away enough to disturb me no longer. I have managed to get through but that is all. I have been paid altogether £899. Of this I have saved £350 which, when I have paid my journey back, will leave me £250. Since I have been here I suppose the farm has made some £1,500.

He planned to spend a month on safari with Willie before sailing, but he did not receive his passage papers till 28th May. He left Gilgil for Mombasa on the 29th.

His sister Gertrude had sent him one of the old 'one day on a page' pocket diaries for 1917, but besides a few quotations from books it contains only lists of statistics about cattle and sheep—births, deaths, and sales, numbers of fleeces and bales of wool. But on leaving Gilgil he bought a pocket notebook, in which he recorded his daily impressions from 29th May till his arrival at Durban on 26th June; with some omissions and alterations the record appeared as 'A Sheepman's Diary' in *Ebony and Ivory*. After an absence of five years all but a month he returned to England, landing at Southampton on the afternoon of 2nd August, 1919.

Interlude at Weymouth

IN 'A Sheepman's Diary,' as published in *Ebony and Ivory*, Llewelyn relates that he 'was at Montacute before it was dark' on the day of his landing at Southampton. But his father had resigned the living at Montacute and retired to live with his daughter Gertrude at 3 Greenhill Terrace, Weymouth. Llewelyn went to Weymouth from Southampton, arriving just as Bertie, who was staying there, was going to bed.

His first weeks in England were spent in seeing old friends. In August he met Louis Wilkinson; in September he stayed with Ralph Shirley and Bernie O'Neill at the former's riverside cottage at Shepperton; he visited Theodore at East Chaldon, read *Mr. Tasker's Gods* in manuscript, and judiciously advised on its revision—'perfectly useless your shouting "genius, genius," ' he wrote to John, 'and being too lazy or foolish to give him honest criticism.' Of this visit Theodore wrote to Louis Wilkinson: 'Lulu has certainly cheered me with his merry jesting, and as a critic I regard him as very wise.' By the beginning of October Llewelyn was settled in his father's house at Weymouth, writing to John on the 8th:

My plans at present are to stay here and see if I cannot make some headway in writing, when you come in the spring take my holiday with you here, or at Burpham, wherever you are—return with you to America and in some way *make money there*.

Finding Weymouth 'very restoring to me after Africa,' he felt that he could 'never be tired of England,' and watching the September sunsets on the downs, he was 'so impressed by the sweet security and homeliness of it that *to have to die at all* seems terribly tragic.'

His consumption was uncured, but his incessantly busy life in Africa had taught him to ignore early morning expectoration, which he had formerly scrutinized with foreboding. Though East Chaldon was some ten miles from Weymouth, he regularly walked over to see Theodore. At first he slept out in the little garden at Greenhill Terrace, but he soon acquired a revolving shelter, which he placed on a hill above the coastguard station. There he slept and spent much of his days in writing, walking to Greenhill Terrace for meals and to accompany his father on an afternoon walk. Among other stories

of Africa he wrote 'Black Gods,' 'Black Parasites,' and 'How It Happens,' afterwards published in *Ebony and Ivory*. The extract from 'A Sheepman's Diary' he sent to J. C. Squire at the *New Statesman*, on whose verdict he intended to decide whether to relate his African experiences in the form of a diary or a novel.

Watching fishermen in the distance at work on their nets, noting the flight of plovers and finches, listening to the lark's late song, he delighted in his days at the shelter before Christmas. 'My days are deliciously long and I let them pass into oblivion with reluctance.' As of old he spent New Year's Eve with Theodore; 'we saw the old night out, we read Charles Lamb's essay and sang songs and ate nuts and drank white port and made merry.'

But with the new year came the mood of depression described in the opening chapter of *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*. 'Never had I experienced a deeper discontent than I felt in my father's house at Weymouth after my return from Africa.' Without experience of the carelessness of time common among literary editors, he grew gloomy at hearing nothing from Squire about the diary or 'Black Gods,' at receiving nothing after a tentative promise that he should have travel books for review. Feeling 'these futile little sketches and short stories' a waste of time, yet unable to begin *Aliens in Africa*, 'a good scandalous book with many a dig here and there,' which he had looked forward to writing when release from farming procured leisure, he reflected that 'this idea that I could write is an illusion.'

On Louis Wilkinson's advice he had been tempted to speculate in German marks, and though he could humorously report to Louis how 'of course Theodore considers I have been defrauded,' he worried over the loss of his hard-earned savings, on which he had relied for independence while trying his luck as a writer before seeking a living in America. But this loss and the disappointment of his writing contributed less to his despondency than the anxious consciousness that precious months of life were passing without full enjoyment. Each morning his mirror induced dejection by revealing 'tiny wrinkles about my eyes and grey hairs appearing over my temples.' From the window of his father's dining-room he witnessed the passing in pairs of boys and girls along the esplanade, and reflected resentfully that the social acquaintance of his father and sister included 'only a number of frousy old Weymouth women dressed in black.'

As formerly at Montacute, respectability and consideration for

his father's cloth forbade his seeking amorous contacts with his social inferiors, but now no longer in his first youth, he fretted the more under conventional inhibitions. Had he escaped from the loneliness and labour of African exile only to languish into sterile middle-age within the narrow restrictions of a sleepy seaside town? His instinct to introspection conspired with his absence abroad throughout the war years to obscure the realization that the war had broken the continuity of the lives of all his generation. As his contemporary J. C. Squire wrote afterwards in *Water-Music*:

To us, who were thirty or less, it came as an end. We had no careers or long associations behind us, only beginnings, first sortings and plans, discoveries of friendship. The war broke on us, destroying, invalidating. Our youth went prematurely, we were scarred before our time by the griefs of age, we had to face a new world when we were just beginning to be acclimatized to an old one.

Llewelyn had already realized that his old world at Montacute had ended with his mother's death, but he shared none of the sense of age and disillusion afflicting his war-scarred contemporaries. The entire force of his pagan philosophy revolted against resignation to sad retrospect. For him memories were always happy because he ever lived vitally in the present, and now, stronger in health than since his breakdown ten years before, he felt his lust for living unabated and saw only with impatience the warning of his greying hair that time grew short for enjoyment.

The details of his environment became a daily reminder of stagnation; as he wrote to John,

This little room upstairs and 3 Greenhill Terrace itself is becoming intolerable, the click of the fiendish little front gate, the clang of the cursed bells, the movement of people going to hold communion, and Father always there on these bright afternoons ready and waiting to sally out for a walk like some large harmless importunate dog.

As he related in the moving essay on 'Stalbridge Rectory' in *Dorset Essays*, his father's mind was failing, his declining years a monotonous routine of morning prayers, meals, and walks, and he depended utterly on the devotion of his eldest daughter. John recognized the debt owed by all the family when he dedicated *Weymouth Sands* 'to Gertrude Mary Powys remembering her life with my father at Greenhill Terrace, Weymouth.' Llewelyn witnessed all that this devotion meant in daily wastage of his gifted sister's life, and fretted against the fate that denied her the time and training to develop fully her artistic talent. To him, too, she gave generous sympathy; he told

John that Gertrude was, 'if anything, more wonderful than ever—a most generous, noble, distinguished creature—quite unsurpassed by any other woman I have ever seen. I am always happy with her.'

The joys of release, so eagerly savoured in anticipation in Africa, proved dusty with disappointment, and he felt the same disquieting apathy as had afflicted him on his return from Arosa to find the pleasure of the previous summer impossible of renewal. As he tells in *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*, he no longer exulted in the sights from his shelter; as he walked across Lodmoor, he would not pause to watch the fishermen hauling in their nets or the cormorants poisoning for their prey, but hurried on, preoccupied with the turmoil of trouble in his mind. To John he confided how

I continually fret over the futility of my days, of my life. Grey hairs on my head, and nothing of value written and nothing of value able to be written, and no girl ever in my arms. Yes, I suppose that is the root of the matter. . . .

And as he reflected that, with the single exception of the Liverpool girl eleven years before, he had never slept a night with a girl, he was convinced that his despondency 'must be simply a reaction from this prolonged sexual repression.'

Yet he doubted 'if my desires were satisfied whether I could write.' Vainly he sought to derive comfort from the fact that he had been a successful sheep farmer; he was obsessed by a sense of 'the same incompetence that used to beset me on my lectures.' Feeling 'a shirker and dilettante,' he began again to tease himself with the distasteful prospect of having to resort to teaching. When a friend of Bertie's mentioned that a rich young man required a tutor to bear-lead him round the world, Llewelyn, with sinking heart, sent in his application. Nothing came of it, and he faced the dread of finding himself again at a boy's school. 'I don't want to be a school master, Daddy Jack,' he wrote in anguish to John: 'I don't want to be a school master again, but I can't lecture and I can't write.' Dejectedly he brooded between his shelter and his father's house, and Theodore, wondering that he came striding over the downs no more to see him, wrote to Louis Wilkinson:

I fear I must have offended Lulu. I fear I may have paraded my cursed poverty before him. . . . Or it may be his cursed marks. I hear very little of him, I think I must have annoyed him.

It was not Theodore's poverty—though he recognized it—but his ability to persist in writing without success that disturbed Llewelyn.

'Theodore can write novels all right, there is no stopping him,' he told John in March: 'On the whole he is cheerful, though a little starved.' He felt confidence in Theodore's work while he could feel none in his own, and since he could not derive from Theodore the stimulus inspired by John, he stayed away.

After two months of depression he escaped in March to stay with an old friend in Jersey, whom he was dismayed to find, like so many victims suffering from the mental stress of the war years, changed to an habitual drunkard. In his published letters Llewelyn described to John the Poe-like atmosphere of the vast, rambling house, in which on stormy nights, when the sea roared against the cliffs, the wind and rain lashed rattling windows, and distant doors were blown with echoing slams, he lay awake listening to his host's 'stumbling footsteps as he fumbled his way to his bottles in far off darkened rooms.' One howling night his friend appeared drunkenly at his bedside, assuring him that there was a man downstairs wanting to see him, a man who had actually stood by his side. 'I went downstairs, but of course there was no one, only a table crowded with lamps and every one of them lit and left to flame without globes or chimneys.' When John read these letters so vividly descriptive of another 'House of Usher,' he must have laughed at the irony of Llewelyn's lamentations that 'this "writing for the papers" is quite impossible to me.'

Though the visit failed to renew the pleasures of former companionship, it served to break the spell of Weymouth monotony, and his spirits were further restored by a round of happier visits—to Theodore at Chaldon, to Katie, who was farming at Montacute, and to Littleton at Sherborne. He was tempted to accept Littleton's invitation to return to the 'Prep.' as an assistant master, for it seemed 'the wise course of action,' offering 'comparative repose and security from financial worry and a certain leisure for writing and long holidays,' but on reflection he asked Littleton 'to think no more about it *for the present*.' He was resolved to commit himself to no definite decision before seeing John in the summer. 'Of course it is you I want more than the girls,' he wrote to John, 'you can always renew a right spirit within me, and when I am with you I never feel that I am wasting time.' In response to John's exhortations he promised to 'do my best to write.' Though Squire had returned 'A Sheepman's Diary,' he had accepted 'Black Gods,' which eventually appeared in the *New Statesman* of 10th July 1920, and Llewelyn

was further encouraged by receiving thirteen pounds for a story published in the American periodical, *The Dial*.

So he drove himself to work at his African novel, though he disliked it as 'a thin bloodless thing.' Apart from John's and Theodore's books, he rarely read novels for pleasure and had never aspired to master the novelist's technique. He could vividly reconstruct any scene of his experience, vitally recapture its atmosphere, but he lacked the inventive gift to endow with reality the fictions of imaginative creation; as John remarked, 'he needed the real life of something or somebody to set his imagination free.' But he struggled with such determination that, on 1st June, he was able to send John the first part of the novel, with a plea for 'advice, help and criticism,' especially for a suggestion about the development of the story.

I am really rather stuck at this point, the slightest sketch would be of great use, because if I had anything with body in it to write about I think I could go ahead—my stupid weak plot I find most paralyzing. . . . How the Hell you make your characters talk intelligently I can't conceive—mine become quite dumb when they are together. Carew and Catherine and the Escarpment—Foxdown and Helen—Carew and Kinow—if you could indicate what they could possibly find to say I should be grateful, even one question and answer would help or if you suggested a suitable topic. Don't pull wool over my eyes. Tell me what you really think. . . . Never mind the actual details of the writing—you will see at once what these characters ought to do and say and what ought to happen to each one of them.

The novel was never finished, perhaps because, before he could hear from John, he had entered on his last brief experience as a schoolmaster. An emergency arose through which Littleton needed an assistant master for the rest of the summer term, and Llewelyn filled the breach. Eleven years before 'his happy nature and merry ways made him loved by the small boys,' and he was particularly successful in teaching English, leading the boys to a better understanding of a writer's works by talking interestingly of his life and personality. He came now with this gift fully developed, and 'none of the boys who were in the school then,' writes Littleton, 'will forget those weeks, for it was a man with a much more mature mind who taught them.'

When John returned to England for a brief holiday, Llewelyn met him at Southampton, only a few months short of six years since they had parted at Tilbury, and there on the wharf it was decided that he should return with John to America. Of their meeting John wrote to his sister May:

Lulu has shaved off his beard. He looks so much older that he was waving to me

for quite a long time and I looked straight at him and did not recognize him. He says he is very well in health. . . . We talked of his coming and he has made up his mind to housekeep and cook for us, taking it as seriously as his writing, until he can help us to keep a servant. . . . He wants to feel that it is a fair exchange and that he earns his shelter.

Late in July John wrote again—of how he and Llewelyn and Bertie had visited Theodore at Chaldon, and how 'Lulu is certainly better than I have ever seen him since his illness began; but he is not cured.' On 14th August, 1920, the day after Llewelyn's thirty-sixth birthday, he sailed with John in the *Aquitania* for New York.

■

Bridlegoose in America

‘I SET sail for America with the vaguest idea as to what I intended to do,’ wrote Llewelyn in *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*. His savings were absorbed by the unlucky investment in German marks, and as John was suffering a lean financial period, he had to borrow his passage money from his sister Gertrude. He had a vague notion of taking a job as ‘publicity agent for anything,’ but soon discovered that a Cambridge degree and experience as an African rancher were qualifications regarded with scant respect by the American business world. In *The Verdict of Bridlegoose* he tells of fruitless visits to an employment agency, of such despair that he seriously considered accepting a post offered by a firm of Philadelphia undertakers, and of his reflections on contemplating the busily employed and apparently prosperous citizens hurrying along the crowded pavements. ‘How did it come about, I wondered, that all these people possessed the faculty of adapting themselves to the requirements of an age for the meanest demands of which I myself felt so entirely unfitted!’ Lola Catesby Jones, one of his earliest friends in New York, remembered how he would exclaim in dejection to her and John, ‘Oh, you people, you who can make a living!’

His sister May had found a small flat of three rooms on the second floor of 439 West Twenty-First Street; when weather permitted, Llewelyn slept on the roof in the open air. It was nearly seven years since he had seen his sister, and her strong personality sometimes conflicted with his. Feeling herself outside the close intellectual and spiritual sympathy between the brothers, she missed the hours of companionship with John that had made the past five years so exciting for her. She found that Llewelyn ‘could not live indefinitely on tea and eggs as we had always done,’ and while, after long days at her shop, she was too tired to provide elaborate meals, she worried that she was unable to keep closer watch on his welfare and expressed disapproval of his inevitable tendency, whenever he was feeling well, of taking risks with his health. After the first few weeks John left on a lecture tour, and Llewelyn was much alone. It was not long before he found employment. Among John’s acquaintance he met Mary Siegrist, who supplied him with an introduction to H. E.

Dounce of the *New York Evening Post*. He was commissioned to write articles about Africa, the newspaper announcing:

Llewelyn Powys, sheep farmer, man of letters, and brother of the noted lecturer, John Cowper Powys, has returned from a five-year sojourn in British East Africa with much first-hand information about that remote country.

In an article in the *New York Evening Post* of 10th March, 1928, H. E. Dounce recalled his first impressions of Llewelyn, whose contribution to the conversation at their first interview 'consisted wholly of an eager "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes," in a vibrant undertone, pizzicato, presto.'

I took him for a literary naturalist—one of those charming and scholarly English amateurs. Was he not decorum personified, was he not a Cantabridgian, should he not, if it ran in the family, be a lofty stylist? Decorum was important, for our sense of it was then acute; a daily nature questions-and-answers feature, concocted from the works of John Burroughs, had been given the air after questioning, 'How do crabs mate?' I was certain so demure a contributor as this would commit no breach of that sort.

Speedily Mr. Dounce discovered his misconception. 'Of decorum, in our sense, he sometimes had none whatever,' he wrote; 'I used not only to strike out his observation on, say, the morphology of hyenas but carefully to smudge it out with a soft pencil, lest some venerable proof-reader see it and die of shock.' But despite Llewelyn's indiscretions, Mr. Dounce quickly recognized 'his powers of emotional expression, especially in description,' and the *New York Evening Post* provided him with 'a place in which to find himself.'

In *The Verdict of Bridle-goose* Llewelyn records that he received three dollars and seventy-five cents for his first sketch, 'A Porcupine in a Kitchen,' but his articles became a popular and regular feature, producing such an income that he could announce to John on 23rd November his having sent to his sister Gertrude thirty-two pounds of the money borrowed from her. Many of the articles were afterwards adapted in *Black Laughter*; many others were rejected when he came to write the book. The earlier articles are short, but soon he was spread over most of a page in the 'Saturday Magazine' of the *Evening Post* under displayed headings of three-column width. Arresting titles were chosen: 'A Lodging for the Night in Mombasa,' 'A Night and a Parting in an African Forest,' 'The Pangs of an African Famine,' 'Suffragettes are Wanted in Africa.'

A loyal and jealous lover of the country of his adoption, his brother Willie felt that *Black Laughter* and *Ebony and Ivory* contained

much that is 'misleading' and 'damaging to the country I live in and love.' But while Llewelyn's vision must have been prejudiced by fretfulness under the burden of distasteful labour, loneliness, and length of enforced exile, he wrote of facts as he saw them, of incidents recorded at the time in his diary and letters. His reflections are those of a sensitive mind unsuited to the rough life of a pioneer and recoiling from callous crudities casually accepted by the average settler. Just as he was uncomfortably conscious of unseen watchers from the jungle, his liberal attitude to life revolted from the hapless conditions of the backward natives, and in later years he corresponded with Sir Norman Leys in support of his advocacy of reforms in East Africa.

His earnings enabled him to contribute his share to the upkeep of the flat. He was not required to fulfil his intention of housekeeping and cooking, as a daily servant was employed; their sister Marian remarks, 'I never remember either Lulu or Jack in any kitchen whatsoever!' Often he had meals with Lola Catesby Jones at her studio near their flat, and 'he would insist on paying his part,' she writes, 'knowing I too was struggling to make my way in hard old New York.'

In five months his writing brought him a hundred pounds, and though it was all absorbed in living expenses, his former sense of frustration was forgotten; he was content in fulfilling his ambition of 'writing for the papers,' and enjoyed health and good spirits. To Louis Wilkinson, for the sake of exciting laughter and banter, he always inclined to indulge in exaggeration; in *Welsh Ambassadors* appears a letter of March 1921 in which he claimed to be writing for the *Freeman*, *The Dial*, *Metropolitan*, and 'other journals' besides the *Evening Post*, and to have 'never had so many girls before in my life.' In view of his long repression this may have been no great exaggeration, but in the previous month he had written to John, 'I don't have the number of girls I anticipated, I don't have any at all,' adding, 'However my work absorbs me a good deal, so that I am not so distressed by my monkish state.' His one amorous adventure seems to have been one which inspired John's assertion that his only 'serious' fault was 'trying to make secret love to his friends' girls'; he much admired and made love to an old friend of John's, a charming and courageous woman who had made for herself a successful artistic career. To another more immediate intimate of John's whom he had disliked when John was with her, he discovered

attraction in his brother's absence, but so far from making secret love, he abjectly confessed to John:

Oh God! God! why can't I find a girl for myself—why do I have these temptations—just that temptation with you away?

His acquaintance in New York was yet too limited for meeting many attractive women. As he tells in *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*, he attended an occasional party in artistic circles, but unknown and unaccompanied, he felt an outcast, and as always when a chill wind fluttered his sensitive petals, he shrank into dejection. From one such party he escorted home Edna St. Vincent Millay, of whose poetry and personal beauty he was always a devoted admirer; later she and her husband were among his dearest friends and he dedicated *The Verdict of Bridlegoose* to her.

Throughout the winter months he was well, except for repeated reminders of his kidney trouble; 'as week followed week, and month followed month, with town and country bathed in a still spacious air, more tranquil, more pellucid, than I had known in Africa or Europe, I felt my appreciation of the New World rise ever higher.' But in March he fell ill with influenza. The light and gaiety of his graceful charm had captivated the neighbours, and he had only to place a milk bottle on his window sill as an agreed signal of distress to bring over to minister to his needs the lady living across the street, who daily tempted his convalescent appetite with savoury dishes. On his recovery he joined John at Chicago and accompanied him to California, where John had lecturing engagements for the summer.

They found 'pleasant rooms that overlooked a garden' at the Hotel Alta Mira in Sausalito, but as Llewelyn records in *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*, John 'had no great liking for the place,' being irritated by the Filipino servants, who seemed to resent his being a vegetarian and presented him at meals with platters of half-cooked carrots. To their sister May John wrote soon after their arrival in April 1921:

Lulu has been very fit, but today he seems to have contracted a cold somehow and is not quite so well—he is always on the edge, as you know. But I do hope this climate will suit him. I'm damned if it suits me! It is so confoundedly windy on this balcony. We have had considerable struggle to get adequate food in this boarding house, but we are by degrees fixing ourselves up—we have a bathroom and a bedroom and a balcony at one end of which Lulu sleeps.

To his sister Lucy Llewelyn wrote on 19th April:

This is a splendid place and suits me exactly. I expect I shall be here till September. I am very busy writing. I really seem to have got launched in this difficult profession at last. My African stories go magnificently and I am also selling much of my old stuff which has hung fire for so long. The country round here reminds us of the downs, flowers are everywhere. It is exciting knowing that the sea is the Pacific and not the Atlantic though on my soul it looks much the same. We are staying in a little village on the other side of San Francisco Bay and when we want to go into the city have to take a ferry boat.

As always when with John, sure of sympathy, able spontaneously to speak his inmost thought, satisfied in the warmth of mutual devotion, Llewelyn was in high spirits. 'Those were certainly exciting times when Llewelyn really was with me in America,' wrote John in his *Autobiography*, and delving in the chaotic avalanche of his memories, as he recalled these happy days of their intimacy on the Pacific coast, he was moved to write that loving tribute to 'the nobility and unconquerable charm of Llewelyn's personality.'

Most of us are made up of so many conflicting and widely separated passions that we are often a distressing and displeasing spectacle as these forces obsess us. . . . But Llewelyn's life has been sound throughout, clean to the kernel, like a good hazel-nut. When he sways in the wind, he sways altogether! You can sharpen your teeth upon him *and no harm done*. You can taste him, and he is firm and sweet to the core. We all seem to have some maggot in the head except Llewelyn!

Probably John had never realized so fully before Llewelyn's 'power to throw his genius into his life, into his least word,' for now he was not only unrestrainedly happy in John's company, but for the first time he was rid of self-critical misgivings, serene in the knowledge of some success in his chosen calling.

In the fifth to ninth chapters of *The Verdict of Bridle-goose* Llewelyn writes fully of their 'golden moments' together—of their habitual walk beneath eucalyptus trees after a frugal breakfast; how he would wake early and read the newspaper of the day before to find John awake and watching with 'a look full of love and ironic amusement'; of their teas in a little quay-side shop kept by a Serbian sea-cook who fried fresh fish on a gridiron before their eyes. Even their differences enhanced their appreciation of each other, as when Llewelyn was irritated (cf. page 31) by the supersensitiveness 'to the dim consciousness of Nature' that deterred John from sitting in a hedgerow 'for fear of crushing the waving grasses.' To John's eccentricities he was lovingly, humorously indulgent, though he was impatient of waiting at pillar-boxes while John's fingers fumbled in the aperture

to make sure that his letters had not stuck! In the sixth chapter of *Bridle-goose* he tells of a walk to the sea which 'was not a happy excursion.' He had persuaded John to walk further than he cared for to witness the beauties of a bay Llewelyn had discovered near the Golden Gate, but unluckily they found the beach littered with offensive refuse, including old motor tyres, and John, declining to contemplate the view, disgustedly regarded a piece of bread-and-butter on the sand.

Often Llewelyn crossed the bay by the ferry to hear John's lectures, though he always resented the circumstances that had compelled his brother 'to prostitute his talents and to perform like a dancing-bear before gatherings made up of people who understood him not at all.' Cherishing his well-worn copy of *Wolf's Bane* and a conviction that John's genius found its finest expression in poetry, he now insistently harried him into collecting 'the verses I published, or he did for me, called *Samphire*,' which, says John, were 'rigorously cut by him & largely written for him as it were.'

Sometimes Llewelyn spent his days in solitary excursions, taking train or boat and then walking far into fresh country, as from Montacute he used to go to Sherborne or Weymouth. He remarks in *Bridle-goose* that 'my brother never cared for such expeditions,' and John agrees that 'as a rule he was the strong one for walking, while I was twisting about a bit with my old "dyspepsia." ' But there was a time when John walked alone:

I can recall clearly & see the very wood where I walked alone when one day he had 'discolouration.' God! how we all dreaded that word.

According to *Bridle-goose* this 'attack of blood-spitting' followed the unlucky excursion to the bay near the Golden Gate; after it the poet George Sterling, a friend of John's, persuaded Llewelyn to visit Dr. Abrams, the 'Faustus of the twentieth century.' Having correctly diagnosed the part of the lung where tuberculosis was active,

he set me down in front of his electrical machine, and having already painted my right shoulder-blade with some brilliant marsh-marigold yellow, which after a few days formed a kind of shellac, he tied under it a round-shaped battery, causing my flesh to tingle as if the fin of a seal had been placed against it. I received ten treatments. . . . At the end of ten days, I underwent a new blood-test and was pronounced cured. . . . Dr. Abrams refused to take any money from me.

The medical profession is the closest of trade-unions, prone to disparage the unorthodox and so often lamentably tardy in pursuit of discoveries affecting the welfare of mankind; whatever the pro-

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nouncements of orthodox opinion on Dr. Abrams' treatment, it is a fact that Llewelyn suffered no further trouble from consumption for nearly three years. And it is a subject for speculation whether the disease would have re-asserted its malignity if he had remembered the Milan doctor's warning to 'give up climbing mountains.'

Exulting in the belief that he was cured, he now at last indulged in the amorous dalliance he had craved so long. 'I made many friends,' he writes—he drifted happily into a brief affair with a married woman, which brought domestic heartburnings when the wife, in a mood of remorse, confessed her infidelity to her husband—'but the one I loved best was Nan.' The pseudonym screens the name of a beautiful girl of fortune whom he met at some social gathering—for, as he relates in *Bridlegoose*, he and John 'used to see a great deal' of Mrs. Sarah Bard Field and Colonel Wood, who introduced them to many hospitable houses. After their merry weeks together in the west, she followed him to New York and met his sister; no doubt he might have married her and been forever freed by her fortune from the haunting fear of poverty. But he lived according to his philosophy of making love while the mood was warm and saying farewell before mutual attraction had faded and suspicion of dissimulation corroded happiness with acid recrimination, befouling fair memories with regrets. Nan was the gay, alluring companion of a season, 'an extraordinarily sweet-natured girl' suffering from 'no inhibitions whatever.' 'How gaily she laughed, and how prettily, mischievously her shameless blue eyes danced,' he wrote in reminiscence; 'to this day the memory of her gay laughter fills me with joy.'

A memorable and lasting friendship was made at Sausalito with Theodore Dreiser, whom John had known and loved since 1914. The great American novelist was staying at the St. Francis Hotel, where his wife was ill in bed, when the brothers went to see him.

When they both walked into the room, [writes Mr. Dreiser in a letter of reminiscence] it was as though between the two of them, all that was beautiful intelligent and worth while contemplating in the way of thought and spirit suddenly swept into the room. Jack with his profound knowledge of philosophy, poetry, literature, along with the magic common touch which he has never lost,—Llewelyn with his great child-like beauty—physical as well as spiritual—his massive head of golden curls, his beauty loving eye lit up by a smile that contained all the sunshine in the world. I thought, as I looked at them in their interesting loose-fitting hand woven English tweeds, and observed the rhythm and freedom of their movements, that they were about as complete a pair as I have ever seen. Once seen together,

one can hardly separate one from the other, although each is the opposite pole of the other in philosophy and thought, but not in spirit.

Llewelyn loved to watch the workings of this massive intellect, meticulously examining every phenomenon arresting his attention, from 'the trickiness of women' to the reasoning power of a spider—'his great lumbering imagination, full of a divine curiosity, goes roaring through the prairie-lands of the Cosmos with the restless heavy-shouldered force of an old bull wildebeest.' He delighted in the lifelong rebel's disgust with pettiness, as when he remarked, 'The present-day world is no place for us intellectuals—we are about as much tolerated as a lot of rats who just manage to secure a livelihood by keeping out of sight.' As they sat together one day on the hotel verandah, Llewelyn read his 'Black Gods' to Dreiser. 'It did me good to see how the old bully-rook chuckled, as he sat there, rocking himself backwards and forwards, and doing up his handkerchief into a thousand little squares.' Dreiser liked the essay so much that he proposed to write an introduction for a volume of Llewelyn's stories and essays and himself wrote to a publisher about them. Apparently the publisher was as loth to disregard the great novelist's recommendation as to risk his money on a first book by an unknown writer; he made airy proposals and Llewelyn eventually succeeded in retrieving his manuscript after six months. But Dreiser wrote the introduction, which duly appeared in the American edition of *Ebony and Ivory* nearly two years later.

As with all newspaper features, the African stories had lost the value of novelty and the *New York Evening Post* was taking less of Llewelyn's writing. The story of 'The Stunner' had been accepted by Van Wyck Brooks for the *Freeman*, but Llewelyn felt the need for establishing closer contacts. He wrote to his sister Katie on 12th July from the Holly Oaks Hotel, to which they had moved from the Alta Mira in deference to John's distaste for the Filipinos:

My writing has not been going well lately, too far from the centre of things, just as I was at Weymouth. I shall remember this in future. Marian does not want me to come back to New York for fear of upsetting my health, but I know it will be all right and as you know my health depends on my happiness and my happiness on my success in a very large degree.

His sister May asked John to exercise persuasion to prevent Llewelyn's risking his recovered health by returning east, but John replied on 20th July:

Lulu is bent on returning with me. One has to live close to him to know the workings of his mind. He deliberately chooses to risk his cure for the sake of the feeling of financial independence, and after all his life is his own affair—those who care for him have to recognize that he does not want to prolong his cure unindifferent. I am inclined to wait as to where he lives till we get back on Oct. 1.

He wrote again on 1st September:

Lulu has had at intervals faint returns of his kidney trouble but on the whole all goes well with him though he finds it hard to work at his writings in the air, so to say, without immediate contact with people such as he finds in New York—for California lends itself rather to health and good air than to literary criticism.

In the same month Llewelyn wrote to Louis Wilkinson: 'I have had an awful bad time with my writing since I came out here, had hardly anything taken, all sweat and no pay.'

Returning to New York at the beginning of October, the brothers stayed the first night at an hotel, and Llewelyn was encouraged when the reception clerk, as he signed the register, inquired: 'Are you the Llewelyn Powys who writes about Africa?' Funds were short, for John's lectures were not prospering at this period, and they found cheap lodging in one large bare room at 148 Waverley Place, lit by the sun's reflection from factory windows opposite and so uncomfortable and sparsely furnished that Llewelyn often retreated to write in the open air of Washington Square, where he was interrupted by the bootblack boys' shouting, 'Shine! Shine! Shine!' After four weeks there he wrote to his sister Gertrude on 1st November:

I am well and fairly comfortably fixed at this address. The room has certain advantages. I can sleep on the roof on fine nights, and the sitting-room has two large and airy windows. My writing continues in a succession of encouragements and failures. Sometimes all seems to be going well and then suddenly I feel I shall never be able to struggle through. My old standby, *The Evening Post*, seems now to be letting me down. However I have made about seventy dollars this month which is not too bad.

When early in December 1921, John went west again to lecture, Llewelyn in solitude fell into fluctuating moods. Occasionally he attended literary parties, and consciousness of poverty so preyed on his 'Powys caution' that he became obsessed with dread of having his 'polite clothes' stolen in the poor district of his lodging, till John's manager, Arnold Shaw, proposed the installation of a police lock. So, when John returned, he found that 'whenever he went out of the room, even so much as to wash his hands in the bathroom,

an iron rod that was craftily inserted into the floor would, with an ugly clank, slip automatically into its place in the lock, rendering by this means our disagreeable garret, with its coal-bag and heap of splintered kindling, absolutely impregnable until I, from the inside, had executed certain delicate manipulations.' According to John, this expensive contrivance was installed simply to preserve from possible theft Llewelyn's new overcoat, which, in a rash moment, was soon afterwards lent to John, who, with his notorious carelessness of clothes, contrived to come home with the valuable garment stained and befouled by refuse.

About his work he frequently desponded. Forgetting the appreciation of such a master as Theodore Dreiser, he would revive his old doubts of his powers, and tells in *Bridlegoose* of how he envied the slick adaptability of a professional journalist and magazine-writer living in the same house. From this acquaintance, a Mr. Divine, he actually took a course of lessons in the art of writing—'I would spend hour upon hour studying a little paper called "How to Write"!' In response to reassurance from John, he reflected on John's vast knowledge of literature and ability to project himself into created characters of his imagination, and remarked lugubriously, 'I have only my personality.'

Fortunately in John's absence he found other sources of stimulation. His story of 'The Stunner' had introduced him to the *Freeman*, where he met the already eminent literary critic, though not yet celebrated as the historian of New England, Van Wyck Brooks. His essay on Nicholas Culpeper, the eccentric seventeenth-century herbalist and astrologer, having been rejected by 'every magazine in the city,' was accepted enthusiastically by the *Freeman* with an invitation for more such studies of little-known, neglected writers, many of which were afterwards reprinted in *Thirteen Worthies* and *Cup-Bearers of Wine and Hellebore*. Regularly he received books for review, and he enjoyed his visits to the office of the *Freeman*, where Van Wyck Brooks, 'concentrated, alert, self-conscious, his curious wide-awake features surmounted by well curry-combed schoolboy hair,' would shake hands 'with nervous reserved affability . . . as a preliminary to looking over his shelves.' 'It was the *Freeman*,' he writes of this period in *Bridlegoose*, 'that really kept me afloat.'

In *Bridlegoose* he tells how one day he received an invitation to tea at Patchin Place, written in a hand 'spider-like and intellectual,' reminding him of Oscar Wilde's handwriting as he had seen it in

Wilde's letters to Louis Wilkinson. The 'lamp-lit room filled with delightful old-fashioned furniture,' recalling his old rooms at Corpus, seemed utterly unlike anything he was used to seeing in New York, 'as indeed, was the poise, the intellectual intensity, the freedom from preconceptions, as of a child uncontaminated by the world, of my grave, delicately ironic hostess, whose round white arms seemed to me then, as I looked at them in the flickering light of the cannel-coal fire, as delectable as dairy junket, and whose fair hair, worn so as to conceal as far as possible the prominence of an over-high forehead, was of a fairer and more fine texture than ever was the hair of that lovely chatelaine who so long ago would sit beneath the glittering holly trees of Brittany.' This was his introduction, late in 1921, to Alyse Gregory.

During the following months, while he continued to write with increasing success, he saw more and more of Alyse. When John returned from the west for a few months, Llewelyn 'used to make me curse by slipping off to tea with her & leaving me to go to some tea place alone.' At this time he spent frequent week-ends with his sister May—or Marian, as he now came to call her—at her house at Sneyden's Landing, for, as he wrote to his eldest sister, 'we get on better living apart.' But when he and Alyse become lovers they went out of New York for week-ends to visit friends of hers, or to Staten Island, Long Beach, Oyster Bay, and along the New Jersey canal, of which he wrote in the chapter on 'Excursions' in *Bridle-goose*; often they walked out to the home of Van Wyck Brooks and his wife, and soon they spent frequent week-ends with Alyse's parents in Connecticut.

'Coincident with my discovery of Patchin Place came the bettering of my fortunes,' he wrote. Alyse was able to introduce him to a wider acquaintance in the literary world, and as a contributor to *The Dial*, of which she was the managing editor, he had the privilege of attending the dinners given by Scofield Thayer and Dr. Watson, who entertained eminent writers and artists from abroad. Some reviewers of *The Verdict of Bridle-goose* discovered, after the narrow canvas of *Skin for Skin*, an inclination to talk too much of 'persons, great and small,' with whom he came into contact, after the manner of the conventional compiler of gossiping memoirs. But Llewelyn, utterly innocent of any intention to parade his acquaintance among celebrities, wrote in *Bridle-goose* as simply and truthfully of his life in America between 1920 and 1925 as in *Skin*

for Skin of his family and his happy summer of 1911. The chapters on 'Certain Celebrities' and 'The Poets' recalled merely the most memorable encounters in the ordinary course of his life. After a life so little peopled by intellectual equals, he naturally delighted in the conversation of his peers, and derived innocent pleasure from writing to his sister Gertrude, seeking to induce her to visit America after their father's death in 1923, that 'I could introduce you to a number of critics and painters of distinction.'

He was unimpressed by the lionizing of best-selling novelists, the Maltbys and Braxtons of the moment, uttering well-rehearsed platitudes while their eyes furtively roved the room to note the approach of writers of gossip-paragraphs and to measure the comparative values of rival fashionable hostesses. He observed with regret the apparent tendency of a popular woman-novelist to abuse her talent 'for the satisfaction of obtaining a reputation for "smartness" in modish literary circles.' He could be amused at the exaggerated adulation of Theodore Dreiser by a young novelist 'a little the worse for drink,' as if 'some young Dick Lovelace had come bursting into Ben Jonson's room.' But while he enjoyed the opportunity of knowing and winning the esteem of writers he respected like Padraic Colum and Richard Le Gallienne, he found pleasure in listening unobtrusively to the talk of distinguished minds, as when he met Jules Romains, and being unable to speak French, concentrated on catching snatches of his conversation and was rewarded by hearing the celebrated pacifist's reply to the question 'how he would have liked it if the Germans had been allowed to overrun France'—'Je ne l'aurais pas aimé du tout, mais j'aurais préféré même cela à la mort de trois millions de mes compatriotes.' In 'attentive silence,' too, he listened to the gossip of Frank Harris, whose acquaintance he owed to a letter of introduction from Louis Wilkinson.

Here was a man, looking like a race-course bookie, a company promoter, who was acquainted with every writer of his time; a man who had received into his round tufted ears the intimate confidences of no less a person than Thomas Carlyle; who referred quite casually to the most formidable Frenchman of the last century as 'Guy'; and who with the utmost gravity, confessed that, at their first meeting, Walter Pater had not seemed to 'take to him much.'

As some reviewers admitted, *Bridlegoose* tells equally of his pleasure in humble acquaintance. Twice as much space is appropriated to the vivid sketch, delicately blending humane pathos and humour, of the stout old German janitress at Patchin Place, 'Mother

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Wiedeswaller,' called 'Mrs. Wieserwaller' in his letters, in whose humble room he would sit in a rocking-chair, listening to gossip of her far-off childhood in Germany. When she was taken ill on the eve of returning to her native land, after years of hard-earned saving, he visited her in hospital, and as she lay like a wounded hippopotamus, saying, 'Misser Powys, I come back next week,' he knew that she would never come back. In *Bridlegoose* too, he mentions the grave-digger Kessler, a hard-headed German materialist, to whom he delighted to talk and who came regularly as a visitor to Patchin Place. All the tradespeople—the fishmonger, the dairyman, the ice man, the Italian grocer, the washerwoman in the alley—came to know him, and initially won by his radiant smile, learned to recognize in him a naturalness as rare among themselves as in others of the gentry class. As John relates of his easy manner with rustics, Llewelyn could, 'by his gift for exciting confidence and by his swift genius for grasping earth-bound essentials,' untie the stubborn tongues of social inferiors accustomed by class-consciousness neither to expect nor to express any exchange of human feeling; he never 'talked down' to them, but said his say with simple gaiety or gravity, as the mood suited, and stayed no longer than inclination decreed.

While Alyse enabled him to enlarge both the circle of his literary acquaintance and the market for his work, he came to depend on her judgment and advice. In October 1922 he wrote to John:

My Alyse has gone to Maine . . . to witness for some friend in a divorce suit so that I am a little lonely. And some devil has written to the *Freeman* attacking my article on Falstaff, and she was not here to correct the answer I have been writing, so it has gone in just as it is. Well I guess it is too bawdy to be printed anyhow!

At the same time he was writing an essay on Matthew Arnold, in which 'I spelt Matthew with one *t* one hundred and fifty times.'

At the end of the year 1922 he and John moved from their bare lodging at Waverley Place to 4 Patchin Place, where John had a room at the top of the house and Llewelyn shared the ground floor with Alyse, who cooked for the three of them. They were always together when John was not lecturing. In fine weather Llewelyn sat writing in the court of Patchin Place, wearing about his shoulders a shawl that once belonged to Edward FitzGerald and was inherited from his aunt Kate Donne, whose husband, William Mowbray Donne, was a friend of FitzGerald's. With his 'sandy-gold hair,' radiant expression, and buoyant grace, he and John, tall and gaunt, equally but differently eccentric in dress, made a striking pair, and

Alyse was amused on hearing some rowdies calling after them as they came in sight, 'Here come Shakespeare and Napoleon!' Arthur Davison Ficke writes:

John and Llewelyn were both men of striking and distinguished appearance; it was impossible to mistake them for ordinary run-of-the-mill mortals. They had not the polished strikingness of professional performers or of persons who are accustomed by long practice to shining in the public eye—but some strange private strikingness that was like a secret known to only few though tantalizing to all. John used to complain bitterly—and with childlike and complete sincerity—that people in the streets of New York would sometimes turn around and stare at him and Llewelyn as they strode along the pavements with their heads together in some Powysish confabulation of their own. He thought that people were ridiculing them. I venture to hold a contrary opinion. We sometimes do the man-in-the-street an injustice: he is very ready to stare rudely at what he considers affectations of dress or of mannerisms; but often as I have been with John and Llewelyn when faces turned to watch them, I have never detected anything but a serious and almost hungry wonder in the eyes of the spectators.

It was in the winter of 1922, when Arthur Ficke was in New York for the production of his play, *Mr. Faust*, that he first met Llewelyn.

I happened to catch a terrific cold; and one afternoon when I was drowsing in bed . . . , there was a knock at the door and in walked two extraordinary phantasms. One was the tall, dark, gnomish figure of my old friend John Cowper Powys, who grinned at me like a fiend and said: 'Arthur, this is Lulu.' . . . The pair of them . . . sat down on my bed, and we talked. One dark, one bright. One, an old and voluble and affectionate friend, the other a slightly shy but instantaneous new one. In that very first moment there was created a relationship which, curiously enough, was never put into words until the very last words that Llewelyn ever wrote to me: he closed his last letter to me with the words, 'My Brother,' and since the news of his death had reached me long before the mails brought me that letter, it may be imagined what light those words cast for me over the intervening years.

With Arthur Ficke Llewelyn formed an enduring friendship, and though the Atlantic divided them for years, they corresponded on terms of affectionate intimacy till Llewelyn's death.

While John's poems, *Samphire*, were published late in 1922 by Thomas Seltzer, D. H. Lawrence's New York publisher, he rejected *Ebony and Ivory*, which was refused by four other publishers before acceptance by the American Library Service, controlled by Symon Gould. *Ebony and Ivory* was published, with Theodore Dreiser's introduction, in the early spring of 1923. It was quickly followed by *Thirteen Worthies*, a selection of biographical essays that had appeared in *The Forum*, *The Dial*, *North American Review*, and the *Freeman*, with a preface by Van Wyck Brooks. *Ebony and Ivory* was

'dedicated to John Cowper Powys, whose cold, mysterious, planetary heart I have had the audacity to love,' *Thirteen Worthies* 'in admiration and devotion to the last of the *Thirteen Worthies*,' Thomas Hardy, 'whose footfalls still, by the Grace of God, indent the turnpike roads, the honeysuckle lanes, the flinty ewe-cropped downs of the ancient county of Dorset.' Both books were published in the same year in England by Grant Richards, Dreiser's introduction being omitted from the English edition for one by Edward Shanks, at that time J. C. Squire's assistant editor on the *London Mercury*. In one of his books of memoirs, *Author Hunting*, Grant Richards tells how he read of *Ebony and Ivory* in a New York paper, and being the more attracted since Dreiser, for whom he had published years before, had written an introduction, he 'sent for it, and was greatly impressed.' 'It did not sell,' writes Mr. Richards, 'but it was a fine book, short, but of the true stuff.'

Throughout the year 1923 Llewelyn's way of life continued equably; untroubled by ill-health, he worked steadily during the day, in the court at Patchin Place or in the 42nd Street Library, walking in the late afternoon to meet Alyse as she returned from the office of *The Dial*. This same year that saw Llewelyn's successful launching brought an end to Theodore's hoarding of unpublished manuscripts, Chatto and Windus publishing *The Left Leg* and *Black Bryony* in London, while the firm of Knopf, on Douglas Goldring's recommendation, issued both books in New York. From all his elder brothers except John Llewelyn was in no danger of being overpraised for his early books; Bertie thought his style 'affected,' Littleton regarded his work 'in the light of second best Prep. essays,' and Theodore 'gives them all to the devil.' But want of reciprocated appreciation did not detract from his belief in Theodore's work, and he was ever as urgent in praising and pushing Theodore's books as John's. He also continually exhorted his sister Katie to persevere with her writing; when she sent him her novel *Budvale* he was enthusiastic, and it was not from lack of effort that he failed to find for it a publisher. 'Get pen and paper, Katie, and write, write, write, write,' he begged her; he asked for essays, advised her to write a novel, and repeated: 'I implore you to continue writing steadily. Work hard. Look up words in a dictionary.' This was an invocation to follow his own habit, for he would spend hours absorbed in reading Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*, thus discovering many words fallen into unmerited disuse, while the purity of his

prose owes much to correctness of idiom acquired from knowledge of derivation of words.

In August 1923 their father died at Weymouth, and though Gertrude went to Paris to study art instead of visiting America, Katie arrived at New York in November, staying for four months with Llewelyn and Alyse at Patchin Place. This sister never abated the responsiveness in which he had learned to delight when she was still a child; in *Bridle-goose* he related the scenes of walks with her by the docks of New York, noting the assiduity of Jewish costers and the women lounging on every doorstep with babies at the breast, and he watched with pleasure her eagerness at literary parties, an environment so alien from the Montacute farm where he had admired the dexterity of her hands, as in blouse and breeches she sat bowed upon her milking stool.

By the time Katie returned to England early in April 1924, *Black Laughter* was finished, with its dedication 'to Alyse Gregory whose luminous Dorian nature is the exact opposite to anything barbaric.' With all his 'Powys caution,' Llewelyn, like John, had a guileless innocence in all business matters. In *Bridle-goose* he tells how, having money to invest after his father's death, he visited a firm of brokers, but felt such repulsion from the 'denaturalised, inhuman faces' of these vulpine worshippers of Mammon that he fled without speaking a word of business to anybody. In this instance instinct probably preserved him from spoliation, but he had innocently disposed of his rights in *Ebony and Ivory* and *Thirteen Worthies* to the American Library Service, and when they announced their intention of selling the rights, he had to find somebody willing to back him in satisfying their 'uncertain claims.' After abortive overtures to Mr. Knopf, he was fortunate in establishing a connection, enduring happily for several years, with the firm of Harcourt, Brace, & Co., who published *Black Laughter* in the following autumn. At the same time he collected in *Honey and Gall* twelve of his informal essays, contributed to the *Freeman*, *Art Review*, and other periodicals, on such subjects as 'The Magic in Names,' 'The Sense of Smell,' and 'The Moods of March,' and in *Cup-Bearers of Wine and Hellebore* six biographical and critical essays on Rabelais, Swift, Prior, Cowper, Thomson of *The City of Dreadful Night*, and Padraic Colum. Both were published in a series of 'Little Blue Books' by the Haldeman-Julius Company of Girard, Kansas, who had already published a philosophical essay of John's on 'The Art of Happiness.' *Honey and Gall* was dedicated to

his brother Willie, *Cup-Bearers* to A. R. Orage, whom he had recently met in New York some ten years after Orage had sponsored his first appearance in print in the *New Age*.

Though his consumption was still dormant, he had suffered from colds and sick headaches during the winter. But inevitable appetite for any fresh experience, rather than thought of benefit in health, prompted acceptance of an invitation from Dr. Watson, of *The Dial*, to join him on an expedition to the Rocky Mountains at the end of May 1924. While Dr. Watson, with his trapper-guide, went daily to hunt bears, Llewelyn wandered away in solitary exploration, and forgetful of the Milan doctor's advice against climbing mountains, he never rested till he had scaled the highest peak within sight. The story of his climb, an exploit as reckless as his crossing of the Furka Pass twelve years before, is told in the eighteenth chapter of *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*. After reaching the summit, he hoped to descend by another route, suddenly found himself poised above a dizzy precipice, and had to scramble back through the violence of a torrential storm.

Often I was compelled to rest for want of breath, but I would soon be on my feet again, climbing higher and higher, with the persistent deliberation of a bear who knows that a trapper without pity is after him. And now the great forest trees on the slopes of the mountain had become suddenly articulate. Exhausted, and soaked to the skin, I passed between their stark trunks, nervous, impotent, while far above me they moaned to each other, as their stiff arms bent and swayed in the rushing gale.

Without mishap he survived the stay in the mountains, but travelling homeward, 'as I sat, with hooked knee, in the small, sun-baked, grassless yard, twenty miles from Cody, I became more than ever convinced that the bacilli put to sleep by Abrams' magic had come awake again.' By the time he arrived at Buffalo Bill's hostel he was sure of it. On reaching New York late in July, after nearly three years of immunity, he was again suffering from fluctuations of temperature. He had lost weight too—a dangerous sign. He was 'thin and changed, with a beard.' He had grown his beard in the mountains, and perhaps in accordance with John's theory that he grew a beard to fortify defiance of illness, he kept it.

During his absence, knowing his recklessness, Alyse had been beset by fears. Discovering her anxiety during a fleeting visit to New York between lecturing engagements in Tennessee and South Carolina, John had striven to reassure her, and even after Llewelyn's

return, he refused to admit the possibility of disastrous consequences. Llewelyn accompanied him to the office of Doubleday, Page & Co. to discuss publication of his novel *Ducdame*, which, perhaps because it was written during close contact with Llewelyn, who always counselled him against prolixity, is the most condensed and least digressive of his novels. At the end of July John sailed for England.

Llewelyn and Alyse intended to take a holiday in Nova Scotia when she was free to leave her office on 11th August. But, after John's departure, alarmed by his continual temperatures, Alyse insisted that Llewelyn should escape from the heat of New York to stay a few days with her parents at Norwalk till they could start their holiday. On the morning of departure he felt 'a sudden sharp stabbing pain under my right shoulder.' The journey into Connecticut was half completed 'when I realised by a certain familiar impediment in my breathing that I was going to have a haemorrhage.' The train was crowded and 'being unwilling to attract the attention of my fellow-passengers I kept as still and silent as I could.'

Every few seconds I could feel my lungs filling with blood; and to breathe at all it was necessary for me to cough little, short, choking coughs. I kept my head turned toward the window, and as best I could hid my face behind my hands. Slowly the pleasant, grey-walled Connecticut fields slid past my vision, already heavy with milkweed and goldenrod. The mere suspicion that I was really *this time* going to die put me into a state of deepest misery.

The nightmare train journey ended, he lay under Dr. Gregory's care for about six weeks. On his birthday, 13th August, he sent a cable to John 'to show him that I had at any rate reached forty years.' By 28th August he was 'better, temperature better and pulse good,' able to write a long letter to his sister Katie about her poetry and to begin an essay for the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Remembering Llewelyn's belief that the haemorrhage at Clavadel in July 1910 probably saved his life by cleansing away diseased tissue from the lung, John hoped that this might again be the case. But as he wrote from England to Alyse on 12th August, 'the fact remains that he's still under this accursed menace and we shall have to put our heads together to take the best precaution.' It seemed folly to resume the old life in New York, so, as soon as Llewelyn was well enough to walk, he and Alyse decided to rent a farmhouse at Montoma in the Catskill Mountains, near the home of Richard Le Gallienne. Driven there in a friend's car, they were established by 13th September, 1924.

As in a later illness his mind reverted to memories of youth and he began to write *Love and Death*, so now he thought of that glorious summer in 1911 after his return from Clavadel and began to write *Skin for Skin*. The reappearance of his old enemy reminded him that his time might be short and he asked Alyse to marry him. They were married in a small church at Kingston, New York, on 30th September, 1924. Llewelyn's cousin, Father Hamilton Cowper Johnson, a Cowley Father, to whom *The Cradle of God* was dedicated, came from Boston to perform the ceremony, the only witnesses being John, Marian, and Richard Le Gallienne. In her introduction to Llewelyn's *Letters* Alyse recalls how she sat on the front seat of the car with Richard Le Gallienne and they were 'both covertly amused by the clamour that went on behind us; for whenever more than two members of my husband's family meet it is as impossible to penetrate through their absorption as through a thick-set hedge.'

Going often to the office of *The Dial* in New York, Alyse was never free from anxiety, for after the servant left in the late afternoon Llewelyn was alone in the isolated farmhouse. But his health rapidly improved in the crisp mountain air. It was his first winter in the American mountains, and he delighted in walks through the snow-clad woods, chatting with the old keeper of the post office, and sitting through the long evenings over a log-fire while Alyse read aloud from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Gaining weight, he quickly lost the look of an invalid, appearing hale and well as he came into the warmth from the snow, with frost in his thick square beard. Arthur Ficke emphasizes that 'there was nothing of the invalid in his looks or manner.'

He looked like a tall, wind-bitten Norwegian deep-sea fisherman. Or like a long-limbed, intelligent but not a scholarly college football player from Maine. Or like a professional tennis player of a certain long light-haired type. If you had dressed him up and taught him parade manners, he would have passed perfectly in a group of smart British cavalry officers, if he had kept his face a little more wooden than usual. It was less the configuration than the animation of his face that made it unusual.

Arthur Ficke never saw Llewelyn with 'his famous beard,' and failed to recognize in the patriarchal appearance of his latter years 'the tall, athletic-faced, quizzical-eyed Llewelyn whom I knew.'

I always thought of him as someone who might suddenly appear around the corner of a rock, dressed in rough tweeds, with the wind in his sandy-gold hair and a queer light in his grey-blue eyes—and his smooth-shaven slightly knobby face would con-

tort into one of his huge smiles, and he would seize my arm with a terrific grip and grin at me, 'Arthur! How are you?' while he peered into my eyes with a look that insinuated that I probably had wonderful and wicked things to disclose to him—or if not, he had them to disclose to me. . . . Llewelyn's face, when shaved like that of a civilised gentleman (as it always was when I saw it) was distinguished by a muscular and lean sinewiness that was expressive of the kind of personality that would naturally have produced the finer passages of his panther-like prose.

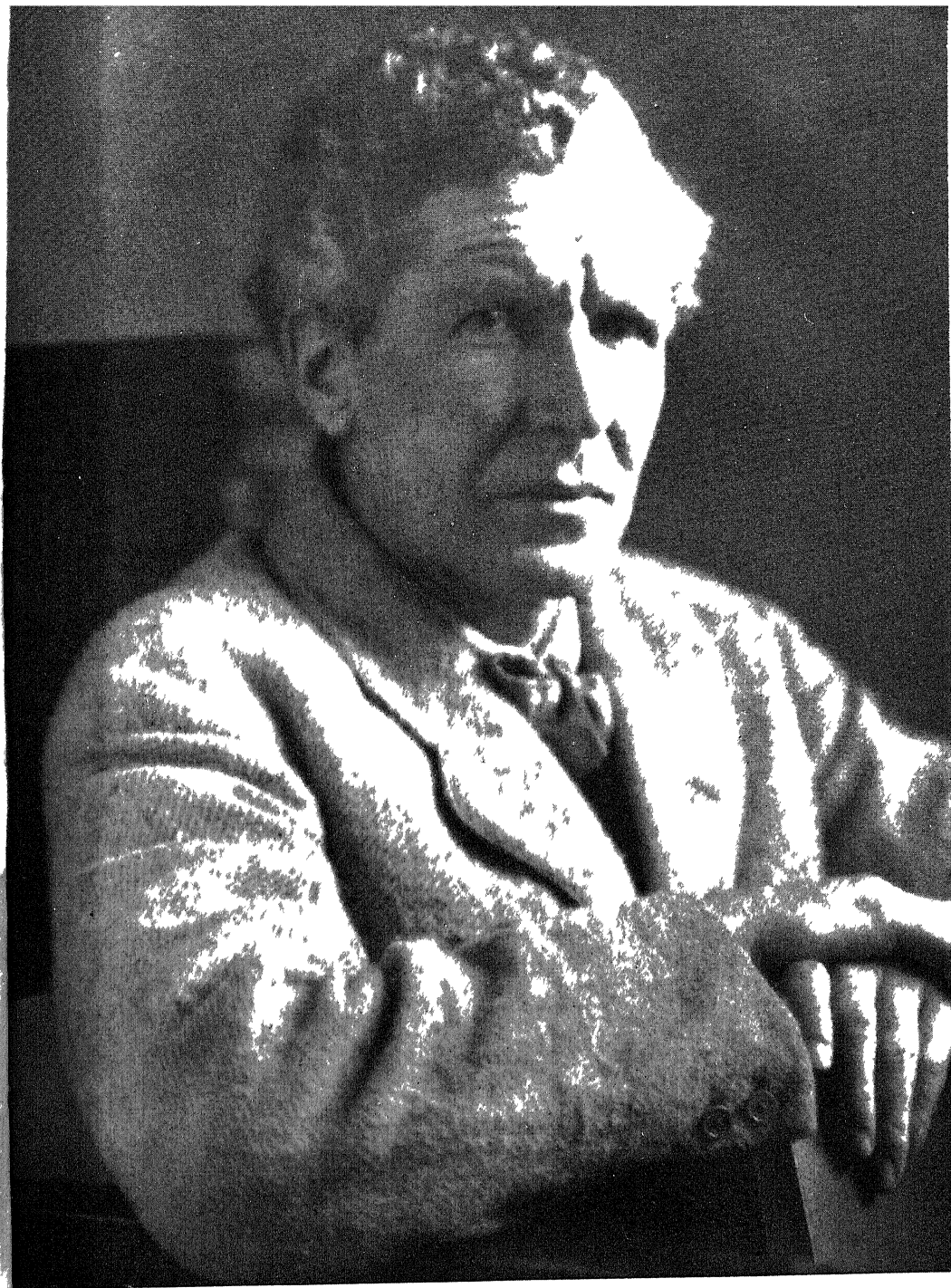
In the following years Alyse became accustomed to sudden transformations in his looks.

I have seen him, as Mr. Paul Rosenfeld described him in an article, like a Saxon King, with something sovereign in his head. I have seen him stepping along the city pavement as warily as if he were following up a wounded lion in the African veldt. I have seen him like an ascetic scholar, like a seasoned explorer—in Switzerland he was once taken for a professional guide—and like an apt and debonair pursuer of clandestine pleasures. I have seen his face a formidable mask carved with deep lines, and I have seen it break into smiles as ingenuous as a boy's. I remember an occasion when we went to visit a cottage woman at Montacute who was dying, and as he leaned down over her she cried out in a transport: "Why, it is the sun!"

So content was he at Montoma that as late as December he thought of waiting 'one more year' before returning to England. At Christmas his brother Bertie, who was visiting America to lecture on architecture, came to stay, and as he busied himself with devising methods for keeping out the cold or played innumerable games of draughts, homesickness may have crept upon Llewelyn. But John also came for the New Year, and as, snug and warm over the fire, they watched the old year out as years before in Theodore's cottage, Llewelyn's inclinations were cleft in twain, for leaving America meant leaving John, who had recently bound himself by a five years' contract to lecturing.

On 10th January, 1925, he wrote to his sister Gertrude that '*Skin for Skin* is finished and sent off to the publisher.' His work on the book no longer tied him to a daily routine, and the freshness of its scenes in his mind sharpened his hunger for home. The approach of spring, as he remarks in *Bridle-goose*, inspired only a feeling of restlessness; by the coming summer he would have been five years absent from England, as long in America as he had been in Africa. Ten years of his precarious life spent away from the scenes he loved best on earth!

As soon as the decision was made, he wrote with boyish exuberance on 10th March to Gertrude looking forward to being at East Chaldon by May Day and asking her to look out for a coastguard's cottage and take care of his share of their father's furniture.



Llewelyn Powys in New York, 1928

I want *everything* I can lay hands on. Let nothing be lost. I am going to set up house now. Let some of Theodore's share come my way. HE WON'T NOTICE. All is well. I shall be at East Chaldon in six weeks, never fear. Don't lose anything of MINE. . . . Show this letter to Theodore and give him my love. . . . It's disgraceful of me to have persuaded Alyse to give up *The Dial*. But I WANT TO COME HOME.

To John he wrote:

It's awful to me the idea of leaving you, my darling Jack, but you know what it is—I *want to go home*. . . . I wish we could all sail together to be back in England by May Day. Dear John, don't you die, my darling John. I will arrange a cottage for you somewhere sometime. I love you, my darling John—I *do* love you although I go home.

May Day found them with Alyse's parents at Norwalk, but they embarked at New York during the following week. As the ship sailed from the harbour, Llewelyn 'looked back at Manhattan, with a feeling of infinite regret and infinite devotion for this great new country that out of its careless largess had given me what my heart desired.'

At the White Nose

EARLY on the morning of Friday, 15th May, 1925, Llewelyn and Alyse awoke to see the gorse on the Devonshire cliffs shining white under the half moon. In the train, passing Seaton Junction, he thought of how he 'had changed there on that last journey with Mother' in June 1914. At Sherborne they were welcomed by Littleton and his wife, and he heard the Abbey bells as he had heard them sixteen years before in his schoolmaster's lodging at Richmond Villa. At East Chaldon he lent Theodore his copy of *Skin for Skin*; Theodore 'read the passages which concerned himself and did not seem offended, the rest he returned with thanks.' Later, discovering that Theodore disliked certain epithets put into his mouth in the American edition of *Skin for Skin*, he omitted 'everything that in any way troubled him' when preparing the edition published by Jonathan Cape. Within a few days he and Alyse were established in one of the coastguard cottages, No. 5, which were the only habitations on the White Nose, 'the wildest, proudest headland of all the Dorset coast.'

In *Dorset Essays* Llewelyn tells how, when he first lived at the White Nose, he was doubtful as to his correct address.

As a child I had been taught to refer to the cliff as the White Nore; on the other hand the gate of the coastguard station through which I passed every day presented my eyes with the words White Nothe; while the people of Chaldon Herring were all of them confident that I was living at White Nose.

The villagers' verdict was confirmed by Thomas Hardy, who said: 'Of course it is White Nose, it always has been called White Nose. You can see if you look that the cliff is shaped like a nose. It is like the Duke of Wellington's nose.' One of the passages deleted from the American edition of *Skin for Skin* contained the remark, attributed to Theodore, that 'Hardy never attacks God to His face. All his sly sallies are directed at His back, but perhaps it is only this part that God has ever presented to him.'

Perturbed on hearing that, despite his dedication of *Thirteen Worthies* to Hardy, this unlucky passage had given offence at Max Gate, Llewelyn wrote an apology to Mrs. Hardy on the eve of the

London publication of *Skin for Skin* in 1926, and was relieved to have a letter of pardon, after which he and Alyse were always graciously received at Max Gate and continued to enjoy Mrs. Hardy's friendship after her husband's death.

The revolving shelter in which Llewelyn had slept at Weymouth five years before was installed at the White Nose and he habitually slept out in it. Through the summer he worked on *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*. He and Alyse wrote every morning and walked in the afternoon. The other cottages were let only during the holiday season and they enjoyed visits from many friends. Gertrude and Katie were living together at Chydyok, on the downs outside Chaldon village, where Theodore still had his cottage, so that old members of 'the circle' were able to call on three Powys households in the course of an afternoon's walk. Louis Wilkinson came with his second wife, Ann Reid, Bernie O'Neill with his family, and Bertie stayed a fortnight in August.

A friendship was renewed with Hamilton Rivers Pollock, a contemporary at Cambridge, who had written to Llewelyn while he was in America. One of the many great-grandchildren of the Lord Chief Baron who had twenty-four children by his two marriages in early Victorian times, Rivers Pollock had inherited wealth and lived as a country squire at Earl Soham in Suffolk. Conservative in his regard for tradition and country customs, scrupulously conscientious in a sense of duty that rendered him publicly the fairest and most considerate of magistrates, he was quick of perception and sympathy, excessively sensitive, and able to share Llewelyn's delight in rural scenes and rustic characters. Inarticulate and self-mistrustful, Pollock found strength in Llewelyn's serenity and spontaneity; by relentless resentment of convention and determined dedication to developing his mind and preserving his integrity, Llewelyn had secured emancipation from moods of misgiving that still encumbered Pollock's every impulse. A letter to Pollock of 31st March, 1927, illustrates both the extent to which Llewelyn had succeeded after less than two years of friendship in penetrating Pollock's habitual reserve and also his incisive shrewdness in diagnosis of character:

Your most expressive and bitterly sombre reference to your melancholy roused me as though I had heard a cry of anguish suddenly, beyond all expectation, issue from that fine grave intellectual head of yours. What can I say? It seems to me that days of grey disillusionment are the natural heritage of anyone who has reached a state of intellectual awareness above what is known to the average person. If these

'peccant humours' did not for certain periods possess your spirit you would not be the sensitive, interesting, and altogether charming person that you are. Your mind would have accommodated itself to the surface values of life. You would never have grown fond of me and I would have never known you. The best that any of us can do is to surround our lives with illusions and strive as best we may to retain with audacious balance what intellectual integrity we have in a life which at its best, even to the well-constituted, is in its very essence disastrous.

No man can claim to have lived whose lips have not at one time or another drawn sustenance from those shocking teats. We belong to a race that is nurtured, from its cradle to its grave, on black milk. But I believe it is possible, even for us, craftily to cultivate 'life-illusions' capable of sustaining us.

Your difficulty, it seems to me, is almost identical with that which depressed me when I returned from Africa. You suffer, I think, from the insufferable consciousness of *wasted power*. The force and originality that are in you have no scope. You could have been a man of affairs and won those honours which are prized by worldly people, and you could at the same time have been a man-of-letters and a philosopher. In some curious way these two inclinations have always been at war. Now I would not have you enter Parliament or engage yourself in any of those employments that are destructive to man's 'imaginative vision,' but I do believe that if you can once find some property that will give you a background to your life, and from such a safe and solid security you were able to engage upon some intellectual pursuit, the writing of some book, you would very soon find yourself restored. Some compromise of this kind should be aimed at. I don't think you would be satisfied by being a Squire or farmer, but I do believe that if you were that, but at the same time felt that your own peculiar gifts, your sturdy intellectual integrity, were not being wasted, then a certain state of spiritual serenity would follow.

I have been reading a book by J. Ellis Barker called *Health and Happiness* and I am convinced that many of our 'vapours' arise from our bodily condition. When you come over we will consult together on his theories, for I hold that no pains should be spared, and no shift neglected, to get us to our 'place to hide in' with the least possible mischance. You are like an English broadsword that grows rusty for lack of proper use. If taken from its nail by the fire place it could even yet win battles. Your moods of lack-lustre resemble those of a cavalry horse harnessed to a lawn mower. I am afraid I have not conveyed my meaning very well but I hope this letter will indicate to you that I understand something of your situation and might perhaps be able with your co-operation to think out some plan of action by which these desolate moods would become less and less frequent.

Pollock first stayed at the White Nose in June 1925, and early in the following October Llewelyn and Alyse spent a week with him at Earl Soham. Travelling by car, 'we had breakfast at Oxford and lunch at Cambridge—a sure proof of the miserable tricky times in which we live,' wrote Llewelyn, who detested motors as disturbers of the peace of the countryside. 'It was amusing walking into Corpus with Alyse and seeing the porter whom I greeted with such noisy enthusiasm that both she and Pollock thought I had come upon

"my nephew" behind the door.' While in Suffolk they called on an old friend of Louis Wilkinson's, George Moor, described in *Swan's Milk* as 'Wilfred Vail.'

He lives in an old house which has gone to rack and ruin. . . . He has a mania for making motor cars. He makes them himself with the help of his stable boy and talks about 'taking them out on the road.' He is bearded and . . . very refined and decadent. Alyse said she felt immediately at home with him, and indeed it was pretty to see the lean bearded wretch kneel down in his park on a drive overgrown with moss to pick off burrs from her frock, just as it was charming to see him shake down a medlar in the corner of the lawn which was so sadly covered with autumn leaves.

After three days with Bertie in London, they returned to resume the manner of life which they enjoyed with only occasional interruptions during the following years. To Pollock Llewelyn wrote at this time:

Yesterday we went down the cliffs to see the waves, and the sea, as the sun went down, was transformed to flaming tossing gold and when we looked at the bastion of the White Nose we noticed the chalk was illuminated with an evil ecliptic light such as I have never seen before, and such as in a single breathless heightened moment recorded beyond dispute the treacherous thinness of our dream life.

Such walks and scenes and observations were the salt of all his afternoons. In *Dorset Essays* the familiar scenes, of which he came to know every boulder, every craggy contour, every growth of stunted gorse, are enshrined in some of his finest prose. There are described for all who care to seek them the several landmarks of the Dorset coast, Bat's Head, St. Aldhem's Head, Portland Bill, the Fountain Rock, the Fossil Forest, Chesil Beach, the headlands and beaches where he so often walked and meditated. Crossing the downs he frequently picked up worked flints turned up by the plough, and he made a collection of these relics, an interest shared with the American poet, Arthur Davison Ficke, to whom he would send a parcel of selected specimens. In *Impassioned Clay* he relates how the spring tides on Ringstead beach uncovered from its bed of clay a bone five feet long — 'the shoulder-blade of a pliosaurus in perfect preservation.' Speculation about such prehistoric remains fitted well with his philosophy, emphasizing the span of the longest human life as a mere moment of time and increasing contemptuous impatience for the fatuous futility of modern man's preoccupation with accumulation of worldly wealth. Confirmed in his chosen attitude of detachment, he was little interested in the petty political reforms exercising the timid

town-bound minds of legislators and exacerbating controversy in the sensation-mongering newspapers. He knew that no amount of patching would preserve from disaster the artificial structure of civilization, and directed all his propagandist fervour towards the root-cause of social evil—the necessity for natural living according to a right sense of values.

Christmas was spent at Theodore's cottage, and there were guests at the White Nose to see in the new year with something like the old rites. *The Verdict of Bridle-goose* was finished before, on 17th January, 1926, a telegram from a friend in distress called Alyse and Llewelyn to Vienna. To Rivers Pollock and to John he wrote of their visit to this 'curious ostentatious city,' where they visited Freud, delighted in the Breughels preserved at the museum, and made a trip up the Danube to the village where Richard Coeur-de-Lion was imprisoned. Freud greeted them 'with great courtesy,' being 'very much taken with Alyse as though her firm dorian glances restored him in a world of crooked complexes.' He spoke very good English and 'had the demeanour of a sagacious country doctor.'

He had a bust of Dante on his book shelf looking more frustrated and suppressed than ever, and on his window sill I saw that curious plant that has wide green leaves and is to be seen in the window of every lodging house in the back streets of Weymouth.

In the Metropolitan Museum of New York he had admired examples of Breughel's painting, and in Vienna he added to his impressions of 'a painter who jumps with my humour more than any.' In the essay on 'The Genius of Peter Breughel' in *Earth Memories* he wrote his appreciation of the painter's simple, earthy realism with a gusto and wealth of illuminating imagery reminiscent of Hazlitt. As he told both Pollock and John, he was especially impressed by Breughel's conception of 'The Road to Calvary,' 'with a cock-fighting, bull-baiting procession trailing over green hills' to witness a crucifixion as to see a fair or a firework display, 'a procession such as I have seen going through the streets of Sherborne on Pack Monday,' such as Hogarth saw at an eighteenth-century election and Thackeray at Courvoisier's execution in 'Going to See a Man Hanged.'

To Peter Breughel the idea of killing a God must needs suggest on a grand scale the kind of gathering that he had seen come together often enough for bear-baiting. There we see them trooping over the green fields, under the shadow of a Flemish windmill, the sporting rattle-tattle rout of Jerusalem. To-day in England similar

crowds may be observed at race meetings. During the eighteenth century doubtless much the same people were to be met with in the lanes and alleys leading to the cock-pits. The more one looks at this careless, amazing, Pack-Monday-Fair procession coming out of Jerusalem 'for a bit of fun,' the more one wonders at the daring of this artist who in season and out of season insists upon life and yet more life.

It was Breughel's bucolic quality, his closeness to the soil and reference to the instinctive simplicity of the unchanging rustic, that especially appealed to Llewelyn's insistence on reality.

Returning home from Vienna,

we stayed several days in Paris and visited the grave of Balzac and I tried to find bawdy books on the Quai Voltaire—and pushed open the door of the Hotel d'Alsace, 13 rue des Beaux Arts (where Oscar Wilde died). We visited Fontainebleau and caught a bat alive under the cradle of L'Aiglon and ourselves were nearly caught dead under the wheels of a skidding car that struck a boy on a bicycle and was dragging him howling and mutilated up to our very feet.

In London there were calls on editors and publishers, and Milton Waldman invited Llewelyn to write a life of Henry Hudson for the 'Golden Hind' series of biographies of great explorers in which E. F. Benson wrote on Drake, Philip Gosse on Hawkins, J. C. Squire on Grenville, and Milton Waldman, the general editor, on Raleigh.

John was making arrangements to spend the summer in England, and writing in raillery, 'Do not I know well how hard it is to catch your attention with your setting about to please everybody a little, taking us all out for a walk in turn, so to speak, as you used to do when we were children at Montacute,' Llewelyn assured him, 'You will have to arrange as you see best, only rest assured that I have hardened my heart and expect nothing of you.' On receiving this letter, John wrote in remonstrance, to which Llewelyn replied:

My letter was nothing. I wanted to show the lean bat-eared field mouse that I knew which way it had burrowed. I didn't mean I was cross about any fancied neglect to myself. I meant that I hardened my heart not towards you, but towards the prospect of seeing little of you. . . . You know how I cherish you and how I love you and you also know how I dislike the idea of sugar on my tail. Your soul feels at peace under masks, you, disguised under a Jesuit's hood, are content to offer false wafers to a false congregation. I like every relationship of my life to be sound *down to the bone*.

Ever sensitive to the slightest reservation and prone to magnify trifles, he fell as quickly into gloomy despondence—the 'sulks' of his youth—as he responded to reassurance. At a word or gesture the frowning cloud vanished from his brow and his face glowed with the delighted

gaiety that won all hearts. The very generosity of his open nature imposed an obligation on those who lived close to him, for wary watchfulness of his moods was necessary to avoid a hurt which, inconsiderable to another, seemed almost wantonly cruel and crude in the blight cast over his radiance.

Early in May he went with Alyse to London to collect at the British Museum materials for *Henry Hudson*, staying at a resident hotel in Woburn Place 'where we scramble for a bath and take extra cream on our porridge.' He found the atmosphere of the Museum reading room so 'extraordinarily Victorian' that 'I am always feeling I am going to meet Gladstone round the corner,' and remarked with astonishment that the names of nineteen English men of letters inscribed around the dome, beginning with Chaucer and ending with Browning, included Pope and Macaulay.

By 25th May they were back at the White Nose to receive John's visit, each equally cherishing every moment of his company. With him they went to Montacute where Llewelyn was interested to find the mother of 'The Stunner' in his *Ebony and Ivory* story 'still alive aged ninety-seven, and as bitter as ever over the woman who had won away her son.'

During June Reginald Marsh and his wife took a cottage in the neighbouring hamlet of Holworth, and during the following weeks the American painter developed an enduring affection for Llewelyn, of whom he has written:

He was a strikingly handsome man, a poetic and aristocratic head being crowned with fierce golden curls and a strongly boned forehead. He loved to talk. He spoke with measured majestic sentences, grave, humorous, profound, other-worldly, rich in imagination, keen in observation. . . . In his whole being there was something god-like, dramatic. The scope of his mind was enormous, his interest in death, his meditation and solitude, owing to his unrelenting illness, stirred him to reflection, whether he was walking on a wild windswept down or being tossed about in a New York street by scurrying subway travellers. Always there was the miracle of being. He hated the vulgarity of materialistic people, pretentiousness and bad taste. He was simple and, as he said, 'a countryman.' . . . He gave generously of his friendship to me, taught me much and encouraged me in my work as a painter. He was ever a delight to be with. Although I had spent a bare two months altogether in Dorset, I know no other countryside so well or so fondly. Llewelyn Powys showed it to me.

In any surroundings, with his habit of 'Luluizing' everything he saw, Llewelyn was always a stimulating companion, but this tribute from one with a painter's trained eye for the essentials of landscape indi-

cates the magic of his company on the downs he loved and wrote about as vividly as he talked.

Many of his friends and acquaintance remarked his 'measured majestic sentences' in conversation. In an age accustomed to clipped speech with hackneyed slang phrases his manner of talking seemed an eccentricity. But he talked as he wrote, with the same regard for beauty of expression, and if the wits who gathered around Dryden, Wycherley and Congreve at Will's Coffee House had returned to earth, they would have welcomed Llewelyn as speaking their language, while recoiling appalled from the jargon fashionable in Bloomsbury and Mayfair. Just as he resented D. H. Lawrence's use of 'hankies,' he was repelled by all colloquial abbreviations as degrading beauty of language, and in commenting on Louis Wilkinson's novel, *Two Made Their Bed*, he wrote on 23rd June, 1926:

The way you make some of these latter-day puppets act and speak is too awful! . . . Of course the actual realistic mention of such places as Pol. Economic Col. is infinitely depressing to me, suggesting as it does the highbrow work of Wells; those are the kind of words that I reject as severely as Theodore rejects certain expressions, as, for instance, when he refused to use the word 'Khaki,' but always used 'sandy coloured' for the clothes of his soldiers who raped his virgins. I suppose you will 'make sport' of me for these inhibitions. I daresay I deserve it but I swear to you it requires an almost impossible intensity of feeling to redeem certain words from their banal associations.

Ever since he had 'played the sedulous ape' to Stevenson at Calne, he had avoided popular 'light reading' as vitiating to taste in expression, and he wrote at this time to the schoolgirl daughter of a friend:

I pray you . . . while your imagination retains the tremulous eagerness of youth to avoid all magazine stories and popular novels and read only from those great men of the past whose wisdom can bring release to our spirits. You should read all the poetry you can get hold of and learn to discriminate and find out what appeals to *your own particular taste*, and then leave what you don't like and follow up everything that stirs a response in you until you have assimilated it into your personality and have learnt to approach all life with that passionate intellectual intensity which is alone the justification of what we call culture.

This letter inspired the girl's confidence so that she confessed the struggles of her inward thoughts, and Llewelyn wrote to her again a few weeks later:

You must not be too melancholy and you certainly must not betray your own particular nature. Your reserve and sensitiveness are as essential to you as other qualities are to other people, and instead of fighting against them you should get out of them support and strength for your life. Do not try to acquire a buoyancy

that is alien to your temperament. Sink further and further into yourself and your own thoughts and in the end you will reach some happier mood. All deep natures have suffered from despondency and especially at your age when the crudeness and futility of life become suddenly more apparent than its hidden secrets. But life is deep and mysterious and beautiful as well as cruel and shallow and hideous, and in the few years each one of us has to live it is worth our while to cultivate our taste and discrimination and imagination for our own happiness alone. So don't you lose interest in reading when in books you could listen to so many voices of great and wise men to strengthen and console you in all your difficulties. If you have not read them yet borrow Matthew Arnold's poems from one of your friends. Read everything you can lay hands on. Escape through your troubles, through your own *lonely* mind.

Such letters to young people confronting difficulties in their approach to life became more frequent after the publication of his controversial philosophical books. Accustomed to his lively banter in provocative argument, many friends among his contemporaries scarcely appreciated the full weight of his wisdom and lucidity of discernment. 'How wise he became,' wrote Van Wyck Brooks after reading the *Letters* published after his death, 'I never quite realized that before.'

After the summer with its pleasant visitors was past, his work on Hudson required a second and longer visit to London for research. He and Alyse were away, working almost daily at the British Museum, from 7th October till 11th November. To John he wrote after their return:

Alyse was delighted to be in a library again and would always find her way to our place along the bookshelves of the circular room, like a shy mouse, while I marched forward in the bright light unaffrighted. She also used to get worried by seeing the letters in the rack lest they would never, never fall into the hands of their owners. We got to know every beggar and every pavement artist on our way to and from the Museum. On Sundays we used to visit the National Gallery.

Regularly they met Louis Wilkinson, and on 22nd October called on Arnold Bennett and Dorothy Cheston, who had already met both John and Bertie. In his journal Bennett noted:

At 9.30 'Lulu' Powys and wife (Alice Gregory) called to see us. Handsome fellow, in a pinky red shirt and necktie. I only found out after a time that she had been editor of *The Dial*. We asked them to dinner. All the Powyses that I have seen have almost exactly the same manner. They are enthusiastic in pleasure. When I praised Dreiser's 'American Tragedy' three of them used exactly the same phrase with the same enthusiastic intonation. 'Oh! I am glad. Dreiser will be honoured.' Etc. But they are a highly brainy lot. We had a most interesting two hours of talk that was a bit more good than small talk.'

Bennett's valuable *Journals*, edited by Sir Newman Flower, were necessarily expurgated for publication, and the published version omits record of the subsequent dinner, but Llewelyn wrote to John:

We dined with Arnold Bennett and met Julian Huxley, the brother of Aldous—a versatile young man with a quick tongue. He drove us back to our lodgings. We adored Arnold Bennett and I think he took to us. He and Alyse got on famously.

Returning thanks for an inscribed copy of *Skin for Skin*, Bennett wrote on 6th November, 'Believe me, my dear Llewelyn Powys & Alise Gregory, that Dorothy & I have been & are uplifted by your acquaintance, & if it does not ripen the fault will not be ours, but God's.' In a letter to Alyse of 19th December he wrote:

I've read 'Skin for Skin'—and I've lent it to a close friend. It is the *stuff*, no mistake, & really *written*. I'm well satisfied to possess this work (which is too short). . . . We count *absolutely* on seeing you again the next time you are in London.

But nothing was more alien from Llewelyn's desire in life than the vanities in which Arnold Bennett squandered his declining years, and apart from an exchange of letters about *The Cradle of God* and John's novel, *Wolf Solent*, the bud of friendship had no encouragement to flower.

Louis Wilkinson and Ann Reid spent Christmas at the White Nose, but, as Llewelyn wrote to Reginald Marsh, Louis 'did not like the wine.' A connoisseur of wine as of all good things in life, Louis despaired of instructing all the Powyses save Theodore in pleasures of the palate. Always handicapped by his digestion, John's taste was further vitiated by bootlegger's whisky in prohibitionist America, and Llewelyn, retaining a boy's love of sweet things, preferred a sugary Bordeaux to the choicest clarets and Burgundies. Humbly confessing 'the grossness of my palate,' Llewelyn assured Louis that, even after studying his written instructions, 'I could detect no difference in the Burgundy after it had been opened one day, two days, three days, seven days—all exactly the same, the same, the same!' In the same letter of March 1927 he reported: 'I have had to give up drinking it because I think it gave me headaches'—ominous evidence of the cleft stick in which he was caught by conflicting disease. His combat against consumption required that his weight and strength should be increased by good feeding, and he had tried drinking wine for its body-building properties, but digestive weakness rebelled against richness of diet. For years he had

been misled by doctors' assurances that his headaches were constitutional and thus impossible to avoid, but after coming to the White Nose, his wife experimented by keeping a record of his meals with notes of occurrences of headache and sickness, revealing after several weeks that his headaches coincided with meals containing an extra proportion of fats. Abstinence from rich foods reduced his headaches and he also suffered less from pain in the kidney.

'My book advances slowly,' he wrote to Bertie in February 1927, 'and I cannot believe it will be finished by Easter.' Having written a second copy from a first draft, he proposed to check his careful research by having the typescript read by a Dutch translator who could consult the Dutch authorities on the subject. 'I have never worked so hard before,' he declared, and no editor of a series designed for sale almost exclusively to circulating libraries and rarely earning for authors more than the initial advance on royalties can have expected such conscientious labour. But it never occurred to Llewelyn to offer other than his best; in 'writing for the papers,' while he necessarily conformed with restrictions on length, he never attempted to suit his style to the standards of any particular periodical or to 'write down' to a popular public. He always maintained the standard of an artist and wrote according to his conscience.

A letter to John gives a glimpse of his habit of work during this winter, mentioning 'peaceful hours in this little top room which Alyse likes better than any room she has lived in, better than her little study at Montoma, better than Patchin Place. It is warm with a good fire and we make toast over glowing coals and drink tea and then to our work again.' On 14th March Llewelyn informed Louis Wilkinson, 'I have finished my Hudson.' So carefully had he compressed his writing that the book contained little more than fifty thousand words, though he was under contract for seventy thousand, but Theodore assured him that it was the publishers' 'business to pay and not to measure pages or count words.'

During the spring of 1927, in pursuit of editors and publishers, Llewelyn and Alyse went to London, staying as the guests of Naomi Mitchison, who had visited the White Nose during the winter in company with Bertie's beautiful daughter Isobel. Mrs. Mitchison recalls how they travelled in a dog-cart from Wool station and then on foot along the cliffs, buffeted by a wild gale, which she described in the ride to Gytheum in her novel, *The Corn King*. In 'the warm

still bright room full of things,' they were greeted by 'the bright-eyed man with beautiful elaborate manners, asking questions.'

He led me to say that I thought an American review of my first book was unfair, and then confessed that it was his review. I am sure now that he did it on purpose, but at the time it embarrassed me, as no doubt he meant it to, a teasing quick way of breaking into me, of getting to know me.

Always in discussion Llewelyn delighted to tease. Intimates, like his brothers and Louis, were used to his seizing upon a chance remark, weaving about it a provocative theory, and then skirmishing in strategic argument, his quick mind adroitly eluding or repelling attack. Those less familiar with the quirks of his inquiring mind, with his rapidity of apprehension and the store of his knowledge, found him baffling to pursuit and halted in amazement at his unusual command of expression. With the excitement of the General Strike recently abated, Mrs. Mitchison and her husband sought to interest him in politics.

Alyse was always interested and full of acute criticism that had to be met or else one was left with the strong suspicion that one had got something wrong. But he eluded, danced intellectual circles round us while we stumped after him with the Labour Party programme. Yet, because he knew I meant socialism passionately as well as reasonably, he was delicately sympathetic, as though I'd taken a rather uncouth lover, but still if that was what I wanted, he as a friend would be sensitive towards the relationship. One never minded being laughed at by him anyway, because it was never done to hurt. I expect he could be unkind, or at least he might like people to suppose he could be; but I can never think of him except as infinitely kind.

Llewelyn saw his political position as clearly as he saw everything. 'Surely everybody who has thought honestly about the subject must be a socialist,' he once remarked to Louis Wilkinson, and talked of something else. The lethargic progress of Westminster politicians was a spectacle too enervating for active minds, and he justly felt scant confidence in the Labour Party's loyalty to its professed principles. Reviewing Aldous Huxley's *Proper Studies* in the *New Republic* of 14th March, 1928, he acknowledged that Huxley was probably right in preferring government by aristocracy, by 'a strong, intelligent and active minority,' but nevertheless 'I suspect that a theoretic government by the people, however dishonestly applied, does somehow or other manage to advance the cause of "that ancient war of all peoples on all sovereigns," better than any other kind of rule.'

Soon after returning to the White Nose, their anticipations of summer visitors were clouded by the tragic death of their earliest

guest, an American friend named Walter Franzen, who had stayed a week with Llewelyn at Montoma two and a half years before. The essay on 'A Grave in Dorset' in *Earth Memories* tells the story of the tragedy. Franzen went out for a bathe from the beach beneath Bat's Head, saying he had just three hours before lunch at one o'clock. Apparently he slipped in climbing back up the cliffs; when his body was recovered from the incoming tide, his watch was found to have stopped at a quarter to one. Three days later they followed the farm waggon which carried his coffin to East Chaldon churchyard. The burial service was read by Llewelyn's cousin, Father Hamilton Johnson, who had arrived for a visit on the day after the tragedy.

The day before Franzen's death Llewelyn and Alyse had visited the grave of William Barnes at Winterbourne Came, and three years later Llewelyn recalled the excursion in the essay reprinted in *Dorset Essays*. After the funeral they escaped to visit Stalbridge in the north of Dorset, where Llewelyn's Powys grandfather had been rector. Though he had left the parish just sixty years before, they encountered several old women who remembered him, and one whose mother had suckled Llewelyn's father. As a result of this trip Llewelyn wrote 'Stalbridge Rectory' in *Dorset Essays* and one of his beautiful essays of anecdote and reminiscence, 'Out of the Past,' published in the *Atlantic Monthly* of March 1928, then separately in a limited edition in America, and reprinted in *Earth Memories*.

He thought of 'taking out capital' for a trip to Holland in August. Worrying over the slight reward he was receiving for his work, he confessed to John his disappointment that *The Verdict of Bridle goose* had 'not done better.' Despite the publicity of being attacked by H. L. Mencken, the book contained too little sensation and too much shrewd criticism for popularity; most Americans seemed to agree with his old employer, H. E. Dounce of the *New York Evening Post*, in liking Llewelyn better on Africa than 'as Judge Bridle goose, critic of These States.' Since the days of Dickens and Mrs. Trollope Americans have never taken kindly to criticism by English visitors, and as Somerset Maugham has shown in *The Razor's Edge*, America during the nineteen-twenties was deceived into regarding the temporary post-war boom of commercial prosperity as the natural development of a great country, and in no mood to tolerate humorous satire at its expense, even if leavened by Llewelyn's expressions of gratitude and affection.

Llewelyn had left America just as his reputation was becoming

firmly rooted in general estimation. *Black Laughter* had made his mark. Reviewers, like subscribers to circulating libraries, prefer to be able to label authors, and, pleased to announce that *Black Laughter* was 'even better than his *Ebony and Ivory*' in the same category, they lavished praise, in relief at finding a writer on travel who could use a pen as well as a rifle, on 'a style which could not conceivably be bettered.' England echoed the acclamation; the *New Statesman* reviewed *Black Laughter* in the same article as Conrad's *Tales of Hearsay*, a compliment the more marked since Conrad was recently dead and, too palpably a writer of distinction for complete rejection, already in process of installation as a classic.

Skin for Skin proved not incompatible with the reviewer's impression of its author. Llewelyn had referred to his struggle against consumption in *Black Laughter*, and besides having 'news value' as the autobiography of a sufferer from disease, *Skin for Skin*, with its serene background of rural England, suggested romantic contrast with his life in savage Africa. As John remarks in his *Autobiography*, 'at this time Llewelyn stood, as a writer, as much higher than I did, with competent judges in America, as Theodore stood with competent judges in England.' In the literary supplement of the *New York Herald-Tribune* Stuart Sherman used the occasion of reviewing *Skin for Skin* for a sympathetic study of Llewelyn's philosophy and a summary of his literary achievement on the evidence of his four published books, deciding that 'among imaginative modern interpreters of nature and the soul of alien peoples, he belongs with men of the first mark—with Pierre Loti, Charles M. Doughty, D. H. Lawrence.' When Sherman's volume of *Critical Woodcuts* appeared in 1926, Llewelyn was included in the second of his three 'galleries,' in which were also Chekhov, Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, Anatole France, and Pierre Loti.

The Verdict of Bridle-goose fell outside this critical conception. Reviewers are unfriendly to versatility in writers. They dislike to be disconcerted. It is significant that novelists achieving the greatest popularity in our time have rarely diverged from a chosen course. Walpole never trespassed on Wells's preserve, nor Wells on Walpole's. Reviewers tended to deprecate Walpole's divagation to the historical novel with his *Herries* books, but he was then firmly established in popular esteem; his aberration could be tolerated as an amiable eccentricity, like Wells's persistent preoccupation with socialism and diseases of society. Llewelyn was not yet entitled to

be eccentric. Baffled and aggrieved, the critics united in deprecating *Bridle-goose*. To Americans it seemed that he was presuming on his acceptance to be clever at their expense and a swollen head required a cold poultice. In England, where he was less well known, the publication by Jonathan Cape of *Skin for Skin* and *The Verdict of Bridle-goose* in uniform binding and editions limited to nine hundred copies for sale suggested aspiration to a select circle of cultured readers, immediately inspiring the hostility of inverted snobbery. A reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement*, affecting annoyance that Llewelyn in a book of only 143 pages had not attempted judgment 'about America as a whole,' consoled himself that 'this seems to be an American kind of book,' as 'his style is certainly American, elaborate and filled with literary touches and allusions,' and concluded with a remark poignantly apt: 'The curious may indeed find something to work upon in this peculiarly American way of writing.'

It was hardly likely that a biography of Henry Hudson would win forgiveness for the aberration of *Bridle-goose*, and Llewelyn wrote to John:

My purpose now is to occupy my time in 'writing for the papers' until such a time in one year or two years when some new idea for a book suggests itself. I do not wish to spoil my market or make any more mishits.

But appreciation of his work in America continued higher than in his own country, and he was redeemed from despondency by a handsome offer from the *New York Herald-Tribune* to go to New York as 'visiting critic' for their *Books* supplement. They paid his fare first-class there and back, with a hundred and fifty dollars for each weekly article.

The proposed trip to Holland was postponed, partly because he was awaiting proofs of *Henry Hudson*, partly because 'we have not too much money.' Late in August they visited Elinor Wylie and her husband, William Rose Benet, who had visited them at the White Nose, at their house in Hampshire, and on their return Llewelyn was delighted by a re-union with his brother Willie, who came home from Africa on a visit. It was eight years since they had parted, and on their meeting at Winfrith their sister Katie 'very generously drove on,' leaving the brothers to walk over the downs together.

He sailed with Alyse for New York on 1st November, 1927, in the *Leviathan*. As he has related in his autobiography, *Odd Man Out*, Douglas Goldring, one of the earliest to recognize the merit of Theodore's novels, travelled by the same boat for the pleasure

of their company, but 'Powys was ill and kept to his cabin and I never saw him except at meal times.' Goldring's stay in New York was short, as he was recalled to France by the sudden death of his sister-in-law, and on 28th December Llewelyn wrote a letter of regret for his unavoidable departure and for the improbability of their meeting in France during the following spring. Referring to literary matters of mutual interest, he wrote:

I have on more than one occasion met your friend Ford M. Ford—indeed, on Christmas evening he went off with my walking stick instead of his own. I shall enjoy talking to you about him when we meet.

They found rooms at 5 Patchin Place, across the street from their former home, and Ford Madox Ford was one of the many visitors they there entertained to tea. At the time of their arrival John was lecturing in the south, but he spent most of December with them in New York. During the period of his contract with the *Herald-Tribune* Llewelyn was kept in busy attendance at literary parties, so that, as he wrote to his sister Katie, 'we seem to be much more rushed than we used to be,' and he regretted the leisure that had allowed so many happy excursions in the past. He related to Rivers Pollock his amusement when, attending a luncheon at the New York Rotary Club, the literary celebrities wore tickets on their lappets to show who they were, and John said, 'You must not mind, just imagine you are a ram at Dorchester market.'

With the approach of spring he went with Alyse into the country. They stayed with Van Wyck Brooks, and disappointment at Arthur Davison Ficke's being in New Mexico for his health was compensated by a happy visit to Edna St. Vincent Millay and her husband, Eugen Boissevain. To Arthur Ficke he wrote:

I had a wonderful time at Edna's. I like Eugen *very much*, and I was entranced by Edna. She is without equal.

At the beginning of April they stayed with Alyse's parents in Connecticut. Towards the end of the month, after a few days at Patchin Place, they returned to England.

The Cradle of God

ALREADY, before his return from America, Llewelyn had determined to visit Palestine. In his researches for *Henry Hudson*, his imagination had been dazzled by the fact that, after a lapse of two hundred and seventy-five years, the little house built on Novaya Zembla by William Barents had been discovered intact, with the tankards, the cooking pans, the books and a flute, just as they had been left in Elizabethan times by Barents and his sailors. The situation of Christ's sepulchre had been known for centuries; the Near East held historical relics of ages long before the Christian era; surely if he trod the ground over which Christ had walked with his disciples, he would be enabled to arrive at 'a juster understanding' of the 'incredible impossibilities' of the Christian faith. 'How do I know that Jesus was not actually a God, and if so I should indeed be a fine dolt never to trouble to look for traces of his earthly sojourning.'

He planned to go in July, but the delights of summer on the downs delayed their departure. Early in June they stayed with Galbraith Cole at Lasborough Park in Wiltshire, and on their return to the White Nose they received visits from Rivers Pollock, from Bertie, Louis Wilkinson and Ann Reid, and Alyse's friend from girlhood, Florida Scott-Maxwell.

In London on 21st July, they stayed with Bertie and visited Llewelyn's kinsman, the Hon. Stephen Powys, a reader of Marcel Proust and an admirer of Theodore's writings. They then crossed to Holland on the visit postponed from the previous year. At Antwerp they spent three days with Reginald Marsh and his wife Betty Burroughs, who showed them pictures by Rubens, his house and burial place. They visited The Hague and Amsterdam, where they saw the relics of William Barents' expedition to Novaya Zembla, Rembrandt's house, and 'what I most wanted to see in Holland—the bullet holes in the stairway and the praying stool of William the Silent.' Early in August they spent some days in Paris and then moved to Belley in the province of Ain.

From Belley on 13th August, his forty-fourth birthday, he wrote in despondent tone to John:

I have been depressed over my writing lately and have longed to have you by me for reassurance. I wanted to write a novel, but I cannot, I cannot do it. Theodore told Louis that there was always something wrong about writers who could not write about anything but themselves and lately I have felt he was right. You know how miserable I have always been when I try to think out plots. I can't do it and when I try to write without one I can't do that either. I feel apprehensive about the future, about my Palestine book, I don't like using up this money before the book is written.

Readers of *Henry Hudson*, remembering its vividly dramatic description of the mutiny in the lonely wastes of Hudson's Bay, its clothing with living flesh of the bare bones of fact collected from records of the mutineers' trial, as in the characters of the clerkly Abacuk Prickett, the mate Juet, and the ship's carpenter Philip Staffe, its reconstruction of the atmosphere of gathering gloom and disaffection in the little ship, will wonder at Llewelyn's conceiving himself among 'writers who could not write about anything but themselves.' But the disappointment at the reception of *Hudson* had been expressed in a letter from New York of the previous February:

My book is out but nobody seems to take much notice of it. None of the shops seem to sell it—so I suppose I am likely still to be hustled for money. I look for a time when I can eat honey in the comb for every tea and hire Mr. Hansford's car when Alyse is tired, and go out in Mr. Miller's boat whenever I have a mind to do so. I worked harder on this Hudson than any other book and small good it did me.

It suffered from being one of a series. Reviewers did not expect exhaustive research in a book written to order for a five-shilling series, and what they did not expect they could not recognize, any more than they had the critical acumen to differentiate between its workmanship and the pedestrian commonplace of its companion volumes by E. F. Benson and Keble Chatterton. In such biographical essays as those in *Thirteen Worthies* and *Rats in the Sacristy*, as well as in *Hudson*, Llewelyn revealed a genius for selection of the essential, for psychological reconstruction and sympathetic understanding, for dramatic narrative and veracious re-creation, which stamps the master of biography, and lack of reasonable encouragement for his *Hudson* undoubtedly lost to English literature more than one biographical masterpiece.

Despite his want of self-confidence, he persevered with his determination to write a novel. In a concentrated effort of no more than six weeks at Belley he completed the first draft of *Apples Be Ripe*. The inspiration of the story was autobiographical. Chris Holbech

is Llewelyn, bereft of his Montacute family background, till he leaves Cambridge and becomes an assistant master at the Rev. Hugh Hinny's school. Then Llewelyn imagined what might have happened to him if, like Chris, he had attempted to appease his craving for romantic love by conventional marriage as a schoolmaster. The theme is pregnant of possibilities, and Llewelyn's gift of dramatic narrative carries the reader in absorption for two-thirds of the book. But haste spoiled the development of the tale to its catastrophe. Llewelyn wanted to be finished and free to concentrate on gathering materials for his 'Palestine book.' He had no time to develop convincingly the character and background of Flora, the attractive playmate of childhood who reappears in Chris's life as his own Angela might have reappeared. Hastily he sketched for her such a lavishly unhappy marriage as Charles Garvice's noble heroines were rescued from, she and her husband were hurried on to the stage to speak lines appropriate to late-Victorian melodrama and hurried off again, and Chris was chased breathlessly to his hapless end. But few reviewers read far enough to recognize the story's artistic defects. Gathering from the first few pages that the argument was Llewelyn's familiar protest against the subjection of natural instincts by the conventions of artificial society, they indulged their sense of decorum with decent deprecation of the ideas involved and felt able to praise the 'expertness and delicacy' of writing in a novel which they would have denied to a book of non-fiction advancing such pernicious propaganda.

Late in September Llewelyn and Alyse left Belley for Venice, where memories were roused of his visit with John, Louis, and Frances sixteen years before, and he wrote to John:

I remembered it all so well—the well heads where Frances sat, the street where we bought red currants, the shop where you bought me my ring which was destroyed in Africa by the handling of bits of leather and Cooper's Dip. . . . Our hotel was in the first street at the lower end of the Piazza and it was Alyse's figure so beloved by me with its sure walk that approached me this afternoon as I sat under St. Theodore's granite column looking at the pigeons. . . . Do you remember, I wonder, two red brick houses, almost the last along the Venice water front (before you reach the gardens where you went to see some modern pictures)? I have often had them in my mind in Mombasa, San Francisco, Patchin Place, and White Nose. They were the same, unaltered, as dilapidated as ever and with children playing under their arches which led down to a muddy shore, and yet since I looked at them sixteen years ago the old children must have grown up and become gondoliers with beautiful drooping bodies.

Always his mind was alive to the romance of time's writing of human history. Treasuring every day of his own life, he adjusted his scale of values according to consciousness of the inexorable rapidity of history's progress.

The story of their journey is told in *A Pagan's Pilgrimage*. Down the Adriatic they sailed to Greece, touching first at Patras, then at Athens. Everything he saw he 'Luluized,' so that familiar scenes revisited recalled their associations vividly to his memory. The reputed prison of Socrates was 'two caves, an outer and an inner one, cut into the side of the hill for all the world like those on the road from the Five Ashes to Odcombe which I used to like to look at when I passed them with my governess in our winter walks.' At the Acropolis 'we found ourselves on the side of the sloping hill like Ham Hill or Camelot.'

It was completely deserted and we wandered along through ancient theatres until we came to the entrance. I, even I, in all my ignorance was far more impressed than I could have imagined. It was as though the old Greeks had left but a few years ago. The silence of the stones was articulate of their presence.

Landing at Rhodes, they passed along a street 'which moved up between neat respectable seaside houses such as one might see at Bournemouth or at Durban,' but, mounting a hill to survey the island's coastline, 'the whole prospect reminded me of Portland, and more than ever so when, approaching the edge of the wild cliff, a raven rose, balancing itself against the wind and uttering its familiar croak.' At Limassol in Cyprus he had 'the worst tea I have ever drunk, the worst bread and butter, and the worst jam,' under a picture of Lord Salisbury on the wall. 'It was as though I had been transported back to a second-rate eating-house in Yeovil.'

Sailing from Tripoli to Tyre and thence to Haifa, they went ashore to drive to Mount Carmel. Returning from this day's excursion, he 'had a fever and a bad headache' and 'felt apprehensive about my consumption.' Two or three days later, on 15th October, after driving through the heat of the day to the scene of Elijah's sacrifice, he was taken ill with a sick headache and heart palpitation. They were allowed to rest for three hours in a cell of the mountain monastery. In both *A Pagan's Pilgrimage* and *The Cradle of God* he recalled his emotions, as, lying in the whitewashed cell with fever in his blood, he contemplated the 'single picture in the room, a tawdry-coloured Catholic print representing Elijah, sword in hand, standing with his foot on the neck of a false priest.'

I regarded it at first with an interest entirely detached. Then suddenly I recognized in the narrow, bigoted, fanatical countenance of Elijah the very expression that I have seen upon the limited faces of the people who are my natural enemies. In a flash I realized that I was, and ever would be, on the side of the fallen victim, on the side of this renegade worshipper of the sun.

The look of Elijah he had seen 'on many a clergyman's face—a narrow tyrannical dangerous look, inimical to natural happiness, entirely devoid of natural goodness.'

Presently that white-bearded contracted head became in my delirious dreams associated with the scorched landscape outside. What ever brought me to such a country? I wondered. The Gods of this land are not my Gods. I should never have been enticed into playing so perilous a game of Tom Tiddler's ground. You have got a deadly Eastern fever, and a villainous dysentery. You'll die in this Holy Land and that will be the end of your prying.

Always believing in the benefit to be derived from the natural rhythmical movement of walking, he insisted on walking down from the mountain in the cool of the evening. But back at their hostel both he and Alyse were laid up for several days with fever, attributed by the doctor to bites from sand flies. Here again there was one picture in the room, possibly perpetrated by the same artist as the Elijah:

A Catholic Jesus with a heart of gold was seen rising out of the grave, his body under the influence of a mysterious levitation more proper to the story of the Ascension. Three Roman soldiers were falling back off the long flat sepulchre slabs in alarmed astonishment. . . . It was around this ancient piece of graveyard hearsay that the religious thought of our Western civilization had for years been revolving.

Disgusted by such cheap window-dressing of the local attractions, he wrote to Rivers Pollock; 'The country is full of semi-religious fakes of every description.'

Throughout the sea voyage he had read the Bible so that every association and allusion was fresh in his mind for application to its historic setting. At Nazareth he felt the authentic atmosphere of Jesus' youth, and reflected how, 'When once we have rid our minds of all Church teaching how deeply we can be moved by the few authentic utterances of this prophet, so sensitive, so stamped with immortal simplicity!' It was the same at Mary's Well and at the Lake of Galilee.

The blue water lay in the lap of blue hills under the blue sky. I could see where the river Jordan entered the lake and could also see where it flowed out in the misty distance. Both entrance and exit were bright green in colour. The length

of the lake as far as I could judge was equal to the distance from Lulworth Cove to Weymouth, its breadth about the same distance as from the White Nose to Portland.

'How one's mind hungers to recapture out of the past every aspect of his life!' he thought, as in imagination he followed every step of Jesus' wanderings.

At Capernaum he was impressed, in spite of contempt for the propagandist advertising intended to awe sightseers.

'There it is,' said our guide; 'there is the very place where Jesus stood when he cured the man who had a spirit of an unclean devil.' He spoke with exultation as a pagan priest might have done who was showing you a spot of ground where Apollo had once stood. It was as though he had found here a practical, positive proof of the truth of all the Christian doctrine, as if this parcel of dust encircled by white limestone clinched the argument for all time, leaving no more to be said.

But looking at the flight of steps from the street, mentioned by St. Sylvia, Llewelyn imagined how often Jesus on his way from the synagogue must have loitered there, 'knowing himself to be an alien amongst the humdrum everyday provincial rabbis.'

Approaching the Jaffa gate of Jerusalem, in his eager anticipation he felt 'a trembling down my spine and through the marrow of my thigh-bones.' As at Hebron, he was aware of authentic antiquity in the sacrificial rock under the Dome: 'It was possible still to see the channels down which the blood of the sacrificial animals used to flow in the time of King Solomon.' But the Holy Sepulchre itself, the bourn of countless pilgrimages through generations, had all the appearance of an obvious fake.

The edifice which surrounds it was decorated like a booth in a circus. It was covered with banners and other bright-coloured hangings. . . . When at last we went into the tomb itself, holding long thin tallow tapers between finger and thumb, we were sadly disappointed. The original grave was completely concealed by slabs of white marble put into position comparatively recently. The spirit of Jesus was not here and never had been here and that I knew. . . . It was nothing, the veriest chicanery, a prinked-up conjuring-trick. . . . It was a nesting-place for masquerading rogues.

Here the suspicions of his lifetime were fully confirmed.

From the first, Christ's illumination was perverted. It is perverted to-day. The secret come down to us is not the secret of Jesus.

The teachings of the inspired poet and philosopher, who suffered persecution and contumely in his generation as his kindred have suffered ever since in theirs, were distorted into a device for regu-

lation of society by the limited politician's mind of St. Paul. This 'wizard of egoism' was 'the real inventor of Christianity as an organised religion. . . . It was he who developed the flowing-away, world-undermining doctrine (so lovely to some, so contemptible to others) about the weak overcoming the strong, the foolish overcoming the clever, the things-that-are-not overcoming those that are!'

The journey to Palestine had not been wasted. By confirming both the suspicions and the faith that had occupied Llewelyn's meditations since boyhood, it made his mission plain. In the words of the final sentence of *The Cradle of God*, he had to demonstrate that 'Christianity is but a single radiant eddy in that deep, dark stream of shadow and sunshine which bears us along together, plants and beasts and men, towards the engulfing ocean of an unfathomable and unintelligible eternity.' During the following two and a half years he completed, though each book was entire and separate, what amounts to a trilogy summarizing his life's thought. In *The Cradle of God* he distilled the essence of the Old Testament to disclose the origins of Christianity, concluding with the factual story of Jesus. *The Pathetic Fallacy* followed as a commentary on Christianity, the superstition devised by churchmen for the subordination of civilized man. And in *Impassioned Clay*, swiftly surveying the world's history and showing how man, puzzled by the secret of life and preoccupied with fear of death, has always sought comfort from the supernatural, he asserts the wisdom of Epicurus and Aristippus—that we all have our hour and that life is its own justification. So far from 'debunking' the gospels, as some critics decried him for doing, he accepted the humanities of Christ's teaching as practical philosophy, deploring the cynical expedients of the churches in pandering to human weakness for superstition with mystical mythology obscuring Christ's message. His doctrine of happiness demanded faith in latent human goodness, denied by the devious shifts of ecclesiastical politicians through the ages. When Dr. Herbert G. Wood, professor of theology at Birmingham University, wrote to him after reading *The Pathetic Fallacy*, he replied on 22nd May, 1930:

You may be right about the Christian tenderness demanding a spiritual interpretation of the world—though I myself incline to believe, indeed do believe, that it will remain an invaluable contribution to our moral attitude, our culture, quite unrelated to mystical claims. . . . As to the hunger of religious emotion I doubt whether it will ever be satisfied. I think its cause is deep and desperate, and in

spite of the saints and my skin I believe the path to happiness does not lie in this direction. I would not take the narrow path and I would not take the broad path but the simple and natural field way that leads by the church where happy yellow horse flies derive sustenance from cow pats, and cowslips grow tall and healthy from the grass, something of sweet sanity and with the same marks on each of their bells that Shakespeare used to love.

At Jerusalem he was again ill. This time there was no doubt of 'a return of my old troubles.' Ever since the fever at Haifa he had been anxious for his health and knew that he was walking too much in the heat of the day. One morning at breakfast he was about to express indignation at an American schoolmaster's defence of the lynching of negroes when he was taken ill.

I lay in bed for many days and yet never spat white. For twenty years I have been sick, and yet blood can never come from my chest without my concluding for a certainty that now at last the end of my protracted reprieve has arrived. How can I be allowed to continue gathering, after my fashion, golden hours out of the years?

Further delay in the Palestine climate invited hazard. As soon as he was fit to travel, they went by rail and road to Port Said and embarked for Naples. A return to England in winter was inadvisable, so they decided to await the spring at Capri. By 22nd November, 1928, they were established at Anacapri.

For eight weeks they were comfortably settled in a small room with flowered mats, a kettle simmering on a stove burning olive roots, vases regularly replenished with flowers picked on their walks, and the table piled high with books which they read and discussed together. The splendid prose of *The Cradle of God* shows that Llewelyn had reached the meridian of his writing powers, but he approached his task with the trepidation and misgivings of Thackeray when starting a new novel. To his sister Katie he wrote on 2nd December:

I find my book very difficult to write. I feel as if I was another Moses, only far less qualified for my task. I am ignorant, ignorant, ignorant. I speak in a frenzy, my style is all I have to offer. And yet I do not quite speak the truth for there are moments when I feel I have a very clear point of view to express if only I gather it together without too much bawdiness and profanity.

His doubts were due to confusion of intention. 'In undertaking my pilgrimage to Palestine it was my original purpose to make a simple chronicle of those accidental happenings that overtake a traveller who leaves his native land,' he wrote in the preface to *A Pagan's Pilgrimage*: 'Meddling with theological matters as I have done in *The*

Cradle of God and *The Pathetic Fallacy* was not included in my first intention.' But once embarked on tracing the origins of Christianity in the Old Testament, he decided that 'there seemed a kind of impertinence in combining' objective analysis with subjective comment, and that his personal impressions should be reserved for a later book.

On determining his plan, he wrote rapidly under the inspiration of his theme. The book was actually finished in eight weeks. On 20th January he moved his quarters to the Hotel Weber at Capri and wrote to his sister Katie:

I have been working very hard on my book. The rough copy is now finished and my own darling Alyse is helping me to type it, but I will be able to consider it more clearly when it is in a more legible form.

Though recovered from his blood-spitting, he was suffering with his kidney, and disturbed also by having to write a commissioned article on Sigrid Undset. He rarely accepted tasks on subjects with which he could feel little sympathy, and of this he told Louis Wilkinson, 'I have never done worse work or suffered more pain over it.' So laying aside the article to work on revision of the book, he wrote despondently to John:

I am inclined to think I have failed in this book. I fear it is dull—a tedious paraphrase of the Book of Books. Perhaps the great stream of scripture will be strong enough to bear it along, a furry leaf from a meadow yarrow caught in its current. Perhaps its profanity will save it.

But, while John, replying on 15th February, was surprised at Llewelyn's 'deleting your personal impressions & whimsies,' he saw justly that 'to paraphrase the salient points or the more dramatically arresting moments in the whole of the Old Testament history, describing the background vividly, as from one who saw it,' was likely to be 'more of a lasting & "monumental" undertaking than any Palestinian Bridlegoose could be.' On receiving the typescript he wrote two letters of constructive comment, one of five, the other of thirteen pages. His recommendation to add an account of St. Paul's construction of Christianity about the life and teaching of Jesus was tempered by a warning 'not to spoil your tapestry with my helter-skelter, more ravelled threads,' and so suggested to Llewelyn the writing of *The Pathetic Fallacy* before recording his personal impressions in *A Pagan's Pilgrimage*. On 11th March John wrote his final judgment:

It is poetical, it is blasphemous, it is more religious than the vulgar can understand. . . . [It] is really very original, a sweet bitter mad kind of book, like some old chronicler, like Froissart or like Geoffrey of Monmouth or the ancient rogue Holinshed—not in the least like Hume or Stubbs or Gibbon or Robertson! . . . I think it is a book that will last, Lulu. It is to me a marvel how you wrote it . . . so very fast, and also how all these things came into your head.

It was written at white heat, after absorption in the biblical atmosphere from the time of leaving Belley in September. To Llewelyn John's verdict brought relief from misgiving. On 21st March he wrote:

Your letters arrived yesterday. Your long letter seemed to me the most important that I had ever received and I was relieved. I had waited in suspense. It was like passing the Tripos. I really trembled before I broke the envelope, and when I read the first line it was like hearing Archdeacon Westcott read out on the last day that that Powys II had once again won the scripture prize. I was so happy. It was a day of joy. I have been more anxious about this book than ever before. . . . I have been working on the manuscript since it left for you and I have improved it. Now I propose to re-type it again without chapters as you suggest. It will take about three weeks and then we will be free to start for home. If I am well, by land, if my health is uncertain, by sea from Naples or from the Mira Mare.

Early in March Llewelyn again had bouts of blood-spitting and kept his bed, but the last weeks at Capri were unspoilt delight. Through the open French windows the sound of the sea entered at night, and they rose every morning to contemplate the colour of its mood. After breakfast they walked, and then Llewelyn sat working on the little verandah, a shawl about his shoulders. Walking every afternoon, he and Alyse returned to a cosy tea and settled to a long evening together with their work.

Before leaving for home Llewelyn visited the ruins of Pompeii. He was shocked by the gross crudity of the mural paintings. 'No pious sermon against the abuse of primitive impulses could have been more persuasive.' Contrasting the beauty of a Greek frieze in the Naples museum, depicting naked boys and girls dancing and taking their pleasure, he recognized how the graces of nature are debauched by the unbridled voluptuary. 'Without restraint or discrimination' the Roman patricians indulged 'rich men's pleasures; sensuality was rendered worthless by satiety.' It was endorsement of his deductions from Epicurus that 'prudence must be the directing rudder of life,' that 'self-control is essential to a happy life.' Nothing could be further from the truth than to suppose, from his repeated exhortations to give free rein to natural passion, that he advocated

promiscuous philandering. On the contrary, he stated in *The Pathetic Fallacy* that 'the true secret of life does not lie in unrestrained sexual indulgence,' and he presumed, as he always practised, that even in cases of strong mutual attraction, circumstances demanded the exercise of 'wit, wisdom, and compromise.' But restraint should be self-imposed by the individual, without dictatorial limitations by fanatical lawgivers.

He was well enough to travel home by land, and stayed some days in Rome, Florence, and Paris on the way. On 10th May he and Alyse reached the White Nose. *The Cradle of God* was finished, ready for publication in the autumn by Jonathan Cape. John's most important novel to date, *Wolf Solent*, was published during May; Alyse's *King Log and Lady Lea* was accepted by Constable; Theodore's *Fables* were appearing in a handsome limited edition and his reputation was firmly established within a circle of discriminating enthusiasts; Llewelyn had been delighted by the success of Louis Wilkinson's novel *Mr. Amberthwaite*. He could enjoy the English summer in good heart and work at ease on *The Pathetic Fallacy*. He and Alyse stayed with Rivers Pollock, now removed from Suffolk to an estate at Erchfont in Wiltshire, and returned home to receive their usual succession of summer visitors, including John, who came from America for the summer and, on leaving Dorset, called at Stonehenge on his way to Northwold in Norfolk, gathering impressions for John Crow's journey from Northwold to Somerset in *A Glastonbury Romance*. Bertie came to stay, and Louis Wilkinson and Ann Reid took a neighbouring cottage.

During this summer Llewelyn's health was good, and in the autumn he and Alyse spent several weeks in London. But the reception in England of *The Cradle of God* was disappointing. All the jealous conservative regard for crumbling institutions and traditions, the narrow prejudice which drove Shelley and Byron into exile and goaded Landor's anger, the shrinking fear of complacency from the searching glare of light, assembled forces to disparage and deter the inquiring mind. Some American critics revealed more enlightenment. Under the displayed heading, 'Llewelyn Powys Distills the Poetry of the Bible,' Percy Hutchison wrote a sensitive and sympathetic appreciation in the *New York Times Book Review*. Comparing Llewelyn with Matthew Arnold, Hutchison recognized that, by rejecting the superstitious idolatry of churchmen, he was able to interpret the poetry of Christian teaching—that he was not in fact

'debunking' the Bible, but analysing its true message. The review concluded with courageous generosity rare in the timid criticism of our time:

When Powys writes he is seldom an author of flesh and clay; he is in the grasp of his daemon (as Plato would put it), and his writing is something outside himself. This was true of his African books, 'Ebony and Ivory' and 'Black Laughter,' it was true of that strange and personal book 'Skin for Skin'. It is true, often flamingly true, of 'The Cradle of God.' . . . From the ranks of the many authors of the day possessing talent, possessing great talent, and using it greatly, Llewelyn Powys stands out as having little of talent, but as gripped by that rare and indefinable thing we call genius. Granting the unsafeness of prophecy, it is all but safe to say that long after much of what is written today has passed to dust and been forgotten, page after page of this Dorsetshire poet who writes in prose will claim literary attention, as many writers of the past claim attention still, for understanding and for strange beauty of utterance.

Comparing such sympathetic appreciation with the soulless disparagement of English reviewers, Llewelyn felt the disgust that has driven so many of England's writers from her shores. In December 1929 he was tempted to leave Dorset for New York; only love of the countryside and ties of affection restrained him.

Christmas was spent at Theodore's. During the winter months few days passed without his walking over the downs to meet Theodore, to take tea with Gertrude at Chydyok, or to receive them in his own cottage. *The Pathetic Fallacy* was finished by January and *A Pagan's Pilgrimage* by the spring. Both were accepted for publication by Longmans, who had taken *Apples Be Ripe* after its rejection by Jonathan Cape. This new connection was based on pleasant personal relations with the seventh Longman to be head of this old and honourable publishing house; he was Llewelyn's contemporary at Cambridge and twice stayed at the White Nose during this spring.

In his manner of life Llewelyn lived fully according to his philosophy. Of necessity, from regard for his delicate digestion, he lived simply. Cream on his breakfast porridge was a luxury that he loved with boyish glee, and his usual refreshment after a long walk was a glass of milk. Daily he walked along the cliffs and downs and beaches, observing birds and flowers and picking up worked flints. In every mood of the weather he found cause for exultation in the joy of being alive. Over his fireside he read and re-read his favourite books, Jeremy Taylor, Montaigne, Rabelais, Burton. Among moderns he read much at this time of Bertrand Russell and George

Santayana, conceiving for the latter an admiration expressed in the dedication of *Rats in the Sacristy*. His wife shared all his interests, and close by were Theodore, with his melancholy wisdom and ironic humour, and his sisters Gertrude and Katie.

For society besides, chosen friends were frequent guests, with whose different personalities Llewelyn enjoyed distinct individual relationships. In April this year came an old friend, Lionel Room, to revive memories of his lodging at one of the White Nose cottages over eighteen years before, when Llewelyn was staying with Theodore before going to Arosa. Rivers Pollock came, strengthening his spirit from the fount of Llewelyn's buoyancy, and sharing the delight of his walks. His stay in June 1930 was followed by a visit from Father Hamilton Johnson, with whom Llewelyn pitched dialectical battle on the subject of Christianity. Then came Bertie, whose second marriage Llewelyn attended that summer, dogmatic and positive, a pillar of practical good sense. And Bernie O'Neill, as dear and delightful after thirty years, appreciative, considerate, casually dropping arresting scraps of curious learning and worldly wisdom. And the ever welcome Louis, with his rich laugh, unswerving sincerity, and balanced mind so ready to turn over with inquiring relish any fresh idea or problem, to whom Llewelyn wrote at this stage of their friendship:

I have found no one to match you in the three continents, no one with as much wit, no one with such adorable shameless candour, no one whose company I so grudge other people. As you were when I first met you so you are to-day and when I am with you all is merry and gay and well sprinkled with that intellectual salt which I have come to value so highly.

With these friends Llewelyn made many of those trips beyond the limits of his daily walks which furnish scenes of *Dorset Essays* and *Somerset Essays*. Bertie was always in search of historic churches and quaint old cottages, whose interesting features he examined and explained with his expert architect's knowledge. There were motor excursions with Thomas Hardy's widow in her car. With Gamel Woolsey, a gifted young writer living at East Chaldon, and Bernie O'Neill to make a party of five, he and Alyse drove one day to picnic on St. Alban's Head which, as appears in *Dorset Essays*, is rightly called St. Aldhelm's Head, from the old chapel on its summit dedicated to the Saxon saint. Another day, after driving to Swyre Head, Llewelyn and Alyse had tea at Max Gate with Mrs. Hardy, who showed them the novelist's study kept exactly as he left it, with his

knitted shawl over the back of his chintz-covered chair, his writing-table before the window looking upon the lawn, a bust of Cicero and one of himself, and sketches on the walls of George Eliot, Swinburne, Tennyson, Browning, Matthew Arnold, and Meredith.

He needed all the encouragement of his friends, for public reception of his work was depressing. Warned by *The Cradle of God* that a formidable assailant had arisen before the jealously guarded citadel of humbug, defenders of the faith rallied to their tattered banner for reprisals. On the day of publication of *The Pathetic Fallacy*, 15th May, 1930, a displayed heading in the *Daily Express* announced, 'James Douglas Battles with An Atheist.' To the rising generation the name of James Douglas can convey no idea of the popular reputation for unction he had achieved since his self-righteous rhetoric had been instrumental in securing the ban on Lawrence's *Rainbow* in 1915. Not content with mounting the pulpit in his particular Sunday newspaper, trenchantly indicting the follies of the age as if Elijah's mantle indeed bewrayed his shoulders, he delivered lay sermons on week-days, when, as on this occasion, he found a suitable subject for wrath. Mr. Douglas disdained to rebut Llewelyn's reasoning, to defend the churches from the charge of distorting and adapting the doctrines of Jesus. Ingenuously assuming that modern Christianity was purged and purified of the malignant diseases that scar its history, he found it 'pathetically humorous' to watch Llewelyn's 'attempts to slay the slain.' He scorned to make clear whether he was vindicating the doctrines of Christ or the Christianity evolved from the Christian legend by St. Paul. Neither he, nor, presumably, his public, was concerned with such nice distinctions.

The short retort to him is that Christianity is a living religion which has lived for 2,000 years in the living experience of mankind, which has survived the errors of theologians and creed-builders, and which renews itself perpetually in age after age. . . . It is not defending the crumbling walls which he scales. It is not entrenched in the mouldering trenches which he bombards with his obsolete artillery.

According to Mr. Douglas, Llewelyn had wasted his time in seeking the roots of Christianity and tracing its growth through the ages, since it could afford to ignore its origin and its record in present satisfaction with the splendour of a surplice freshly laundered by Mr. Douglas.

In another popular London newspaper a distinguished cleric took a different line. Remembering Middleton Murry's *Life of Jesus*, he remarked as 'an interesting sign of the times that literary men—

poets, essayists, novelists—should have taken to writing books about Christianity.' It was 'all to the good.' Llewelyn's 'treatment of Jesus' was 'sympathetic,' but 'with regard to the development of Catholic Christianity, the facts which Mr. Powys gives us are correct as far as they go, though they are unsympathetically represented.' Llewelyn was guilty of 'mannerisms of style,' and 'his standards are altogether too provincial.' 'Of course, St. Paul can be called a neurotic, but the same can be said of every man of genius.' Llewelyn did 'not see that Catholicism was a natural and inevitable and, on the whole, a beneficent growth,' and he 'overlooked' the fact 'that the dogmatism of Calvin was an effective instrument against the dogmatism of Rome.' The distinguished clerical reviewer concluded on a note of pained disappointment: 'One expected better things of one who understands something of poetry.'

It was a sign of the times that such reviews of serious books should be spread over several columns in popular newspapers, in which, according to their advertisement rates, space was extravagantly expensive. It was a sign of the times that reviews in such newspapers, loudly proclaiming prodigious figures of circulation, had absolutely no effect in promoting the sales of books reviewed. Time was when reviewers like Andrew Lang could send a book immediately into a second edition. Since then, free education had enormously increased the potential reading public, and books were much cheaper in comparative relation with incomes and the cost of living. But much fewer people read serious books. Newspapers chattered that books had never been in such demand, but with characteristic absence of discrimination, they did not specify the sort of books in demand. The phenomenal sales of Edgar Wallace were sufficient indication. Crime and sport were the two main preoccupations of recreation encouraged by the cinemas and the popular press. In churches parsons conducted services to empty pews. At elections less than half the population bothered to exercise the right of franchise. Complaining of popular apathy, politicians staged a 'crisis,' proclaiming imminent financial ruin for a country which eight years later embarked on the most expensive war in history. The result, with an electorate so easily gulled, was to undermine the parliamentary system by reducing the necessary Opposition to impotence. Anybody attempting to speak seriously was despised as a bore or an eccentric. With lives divided between superficial pleasures and making the money required to purchase those pleasures, nobody

wanted to think. It was an age destitute of dignity and integrity, in which mediocrity and conformity were the essentials of success, while lazily, unintelligently, a nation drifted to disaster.

There were not wanting writers to give warning. From established elders like Shaw and Wells to Llewelyn's juniors like Aldous Huxley and Henry Williamson, many men of integrity and intellect uttered denunciation and appeal. Some younger writers, such as Huxley, Aldington, and Auden, followed the example of D. H. Lawrence in leaving a country apparently sottishly resolved on self-destruction. Llewelyn loved Dorset too well to pull up his roots, but suddenly in August 1930 he determined on the visit to America over which he had hesitated in the previous December.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Impassioned Clay

ON arriving at New York late in August, Llewelyn and Alyse went to stay with John at Hillsdale, where he had a cottage close to the home of Arthur Davison Ficke. They stayed throughout September, walking together in the woods while the autumn leaves changed colour and enjoying the conversation of John, of Phyllis Playter, and of Arthur Ficke and his wife. It was at this time that Arthur Ficke, discovering Llewelyn's possession of a drug which he always carried with him so that, in the event of his being afflicted by unbearable pain, he could find release without implication of an accessory, wrote his poem 'To a Friend Who Cherishes a Vial of Poison.'

October was spent at New York, then agitated by the economic depression. 'Everything is "on the bum" in the country,' wrote Llewelyn to Rivers Pollock, 'banks breaking and misery and poverty—the book business at a standstill.' In spite of the general commercial stagnation the sales of *Apples Be Ripe*, published in New York during the early summer, had been encouraging, and Llewelyn told Pollock:

Apples Be Ripe has sold four thousand over here. It is a very *simple* story, I know, but it also has something wild and challenging in it. I am not ashamed of it and believe you a little under-estimate its value.

The cheering warmth of its commercial success caused Llewelyn to think always affectionately of his novel, though well aware of its faults. Some years later he wrote of it to Mr. H. Clifford Ancell:

The book received a great deal of attention at the time of its publication and, excepting for *Black Laughter*, sold better than any other book I have written. It is my only novel. I like it as a banner or battle cry, but I agree with you in thinking it has many faults. I wrote it too quickly and too carelessly.

His health was uncertain, troubled by headaches and pain in the kidney. In the spring he had begun work on *Impassioned Clay*, and had written to John in May:

All the time I am reading for my most important book which is to be a positive 'constructive' trumpet call to youth, something of a Devil's Handbook such as we used to plan, only setting forth clearly from a dug-in Dorset 'view-point' the

human situation touching upon astronomy, biology, geology, anthropology, and gradually closing in upon a system of practical ethics as explained by Epicurus.

The ambitious plan and its achievement indicate the copious reading undertaken during the spring and summer. The writing of the book was begun at the White Nose, but he settled seriously to finish it when they were lent a cottage at the beginning of November on the Steepletop estate of Edna St. Vincent Millay and Eugen Boissevain at Austerlitz in New York State. 'This beautiful and famous poet had always entranced Llewelyn's imagination,' wrote Alyse Gregory, 'and her husband was, in his own way, as rare a character as she.'

Handsome, reckless, mettlesome as a stallion breathing the first morning air, he would laugh at himself, indeed laugh at everything, with a laugh that scattered melancholy as the wind scatters the petals of the fading poppy. . . . One day his house would be that of a citizen of the world, with a French butler to wait on the table and everything done with the greatest *bien-séance*, and the next the servants would have as mysteriously disappeared as bees from a deserted hive, and he would be out in the kitchen washing the dishes and whistling a haunting Slavic melody, as light-hearted as a troubadour. He had the gift of the aristocrat and could adapt himself to all circumstances. . . . His blood was testy, adventurous, quixotic, and he faced life as an eagle faces its flight.

Between Llewelyn and such a free spirit there was naturally strong mutual attraction, and it was especially appropriate that *Impassioned Clay*, his 'trumpet call to youth,' should have been 'dedicated to Eugen Boissevain under whose roof and in the presence of whose daring spirit this book was finished.'

'What it all amounts to,' wrote Mr. Richard Church of Llewelyn's philosophy when reviewing *Earth Memories* in the *New Statesman*, 'is that we should live dangerously, as Mr. Powys willy-nilly has had to live.' It became a commonplace of criticism by those intent to defend the established conventions of the social system that Llewelyn's doctrine was dictated by his consciousness of death's proximity. They had the excuse of being unaware that he had discarded Christianity and begun to form his poetic faith before he was afflicted by consumption. But it might surely have occurred to them that it would be infinitely easier to one continually confronting death to comfort himself with the prospect of a future life than to insist that death was the end, as Llewelyn repeatedly urged as an argument for living with individual integrity, independently of society's limiting inhibitions.

As he records in *Genius of England*, H. J. Massingham once spoke

to Llewelyn 'of this courage of life in which he, the lover of life, excelled, and he replied that his senses were one throb of fear.'

I asked him how with fear he could have cast out death which time after time he had done in his life. Because, he said, you are fearful of the edges of all the dark places, but all the same you take the jump.'

Jump, and jump with all your might, in determination to clear the yawning chasm, but Llewelyn never counselled living 'dangerously,' in the sense of recklessness. On the contrary, in *Impassioned Clay*, and again in *Glory of Life* and *Damnably Opinions*, he emphasized the need for circumspection, for the exercise of every wit, in pursuit of happiness.

The prospect of immediate happiness must constantly be forgone under the training of a far-sighted wisdom. . . . Yet we would be doing a disservice to our selves and to others if we forwent an opportunity of delight through cowardice, or through deference to the machinations of the petty-spirited.

Self-denial was justifiable only for the attainment of the greatest possible measure of happiness. It was a vice when applied from timidity or at the behest of fearful ecclesiastical politicians promising prizes in heaven for servility on earth. Llewelyn invited youth to live, not 'dangerously,' but courageously, with contempt for 'the foolish talk of envious old women and of fearful, defeated old men.'

In time of peace self-seeking politicians condemn Llewelyn's creed as conducive to anarchy. But when their want of vision, their want of any higher principle than avarice, has implicated nations in war, they wax eloquent in exhorting youth to live dangerously, not in their own interest, but for the preservation of some ideological figment of imagination. Llewelyn appealed to youth to assert its right to live with the same zeal as politicians at war invited it to die. He saw in Eugen Boissevain an adventurous spirit in no need of his adjurations. By contrast, he saw millions of young men helpless as flies in the web of our 'cheap urban civilization.' 'With our over-population,' he wrote, 'with our merciless exploitation of the labour of others, with all the misery that is involved in our overcrowded cities, with our avarice and our greed, the true intention of life has been forgotten.' He asked for a re-adjustment of values at a time when adoption of his creed might have averted impending calamity. Ten years later, after his death and when the world was reaping the bitter harvest of false values, there arose innumerable belated prophets to lavish advice upon people no longer able to help themselves.

With Edna Millay and Eugen Boissevain close at hand, and John and Arthur Ficke near enough for frequent contact, Llewelyn could enjoy the warmth of friendship and congenial conversation while delighting in the solitude of a beautiful countryside. 'It is very cold up in these mountains,' he wrote to Rivers Pollock:

It is the kind of place you would like, all by itself and self-sufficient like a mediaeval manor. I have never had so much milk and cream in my life. We go for long walks in the woods.

The peace of nature was disturbed only by the open shooting season, during which Llewelyn was enraged by seeing stags carried away on the backs of motor cars. By 9th December Alyse was typing *Impassioned Clay*, and she wrote to Bertie, 'Lulu is sitting near me reading Burton, still his favourite author.'

On Christmas Eve they drove through the snow to spend the night at John's cottage. On Christmas Day they dined with Edna Millay and Eugen Boissevain, discussing the difference between French and English poetry, between love and passion. New Year's Eve was spent at John's. They remained at Steepletop throughout January before going to New York, where Llewelyn stayed alone, spending some time with his sister Marian at Palisades, while Alyse went to her parents at Norwalk. He had enjoyed winter in the country, watching foxes in the valleys foraging by moonlight, stumbling up the snow path to Edna Millay's house to enter the firelit hall, and driving with Eugen Boissevain in his horse-drawn sleigh on sharp frosty mornings. He did not deny the winter attractions of New York City.

It is pleasant enough on a gusty night to enter one of the city's 'speak-easies' where thoughtless, smartly dressed girls stand taking off their furs in the hall, and where there is the sound of laughter and talk all about one, and wine on the glittering, well-appointed tables. I would not deny that there are rewards to be gained from such sophisticated gatherings—and yet can such rewards even when most fortunate be compared with the solid gain that comes from wintering in the country?

But 'in America the winter sleep of the earth is very deep and the approach of spring tardy. . . . When at home the hedgerows would be starred with celandines, icicles are still hanging from the penthouse eaves in America.' Impatient for warm sunshine, he proposed a voyage to the West Indies when Alyse returned from Connecticut and they sailed from Brooklyn in the middle of February 1931.

Among Llewelyn's papers is an unpublished manuscript of some seven thousand words called *A Voyage to the West Indies*, recording his

reminiscences of the trip. In the light of subsequent revelations by the government commission appointed to report on economic conditions in certain of the islands, it is interesting that no editor found space for this article. At St. Kitts Llewelyn talked with native women hoeing furrows in the fields for sugar cane planting and found that they earned only three shillings a week. At Antigua he was told 'one long story of poverty and oppression.' If natives were tempted by the wretchedness of poverty to theft and stole only a single sugar cane, 'it was tied behind their backs and they were taken off to gaol.' 'When we are let out of prison,' one old woman exclaimed, 'they won't even give us back what we have stolen!' Abject ignorance prevailed among most of the negroes. At Dominica Llewelyn made one of a motley congregation in 'a church-like barn.'

The preacher was standing within a pen made of wooden railings . . . whenever the preacher quoted from the scriptures he would pause before repeating the last words of the text and the congregation would then chant in unison as though by this means they were giving confirmation to the truth. The man's voice was violent and the building resounded with the dissonance he made. . . . The subject of the sermon was of the second coming of Jesus, and each rhetorical utterance was punctuated by the words 'Glory be' and 'Halleluyah.' We might have been witnessing an ecstatic slave service taking place in the Roman catacombs two thousand years ago.

On one island Llewelyn asked a native sentry outside Government House what he thought of his master. 'He is not much appreciated,' was the guarded reply. On the other hand, everywhere on the islands he heard the name of Sir Eustace Fiennes mentioned with reverence and enthusiastic affection.

'He was a good man, he was a blessed man. We pray for him night and day, may the Lord bless his name. He was a friend to us poor folk. He would never have us want for bread. He would give us money. He would let us out of prison.' . . . I got an impression of this man as being a kind of Grangousier, a governor unlike all other governors, free, generous, wise with the wisdom of the ancient giants. Equally indifferent to racial or class prejudice, he must have gone on his way with benevolent aplomb, having the cares of the meanest of his subjects under his paternal eye. I was proud enough that England could still produce men of such independent temper.

At St. Thomas, the first place at which they touched, Llewelyn was tempted by the likeness of the beach to Ringstead to bathe. He was 'a little apprehensive of sharks,' but the preoccupation did not last long, as he trod upon a sea urchin.

My foot was bleeding and from heel to toe was peppered with infinitesimal thorns. I found it impossible to remove any of them. I was like a lion with por-

cupine quills in its paw. All my old suspicion of the tropics returned, all my suspicion of these countries which in spite of their favoured appearance, invariably conceal some kind of malicious intent.

At the local hospital he had each individual prickle cut out.

I felt convinced that our excursion was ruined and that a month would have to pass before I would be able to move freely, though as a matter of fact in twenty-four hours I could get about without too great inconvenience.

At Martinique he found the ruined city of St. Pierre, destroyed by eruption of the neighbouring smoking volcano, more impressive than Pompeii, 'its streets broader and its crumbling walls higher.' The road to St. Pierre passed jungles denser than in Africa, 'with creepers overmantling creepers, and parasite growing out of parasites.'

There was something depressing, terrifying about them. There were few birds and no animals. It was as if the vegetable world, eyeless and without tooth or claw, were in mute insurrection, its dumb octopus-like legionaries forever advancing, forever throttling and suffocating, and forever unvanquished. In a flash one comprehended what the earth would have been like had the miracle of life stirred only in boughs and branches, leaves and fronds, a strangling, speechless kingdom.

Wandering through the forests of Trinidad, he encountered a religious hermit, a white man who had loved a native woman and believed in the spiritual life. Further on, he stumbled upon the ruins of an abandoned leper colony, partially destroyed after the patients had been removed to another island. Later inquiring about the discipline and manner of life of the place, he learned how 'the men and women were segregated, and yet what devices they had in coming to each other, leaving dummy lepers in sleeping cots and I know not what else.'

At Dominica he noticed a village set between two mountains named Portsmouth. He was told that living there was good and cheap. 'I marked it as a place of retreat if all my affairs were to go Kim Kam.' But, like Coleridge before him, he was never to settle in the West Indies.

By 15th March he and Alyse were back at Austerlitz. 'There was still no sign of the spring' and 'the snow was banked as high as ever on each side of the road.' They packed and went to Norwalk to see Alyse's parents. Staying the last night at Sneyden's Landing with his sister Marian, they sailed for England in the 'Bremen' on 31st March. Before leaving, though he had arranged for publication of *Impassioned Clay* with Harcourt, Brace, who were, on the point of publishing

A Pagan's Pilgrimage, he asked to be released from the contract in order to have all his books with Longmans.

In the chill damp of Easter Sunday they trod the streets of Southampton and, arriving at Chaldon, left their luggage at the farm to walk over the familiar downs to tea with Gertrude and Katie at Chydyok. They stayed several days at Chydyok, Llewelyn occupying himself with digging the garden. Since finishing *Impassioned Clay* he had written little. After four books in two and a half years, three of them important contributions to literature and philosophy, he required some respite from composition.

On resuming their life at the White Nose he still hesitated before setting to work. He delighted in his old walks, and one morning awoke Alyse before dawn to watch a fox's earth where they saw the cubs playing as they awaited the vixen's return. With boyish exuberance he showed his stuffed flying fish and other West Indian trophies to Herbert Parker, the farm labourer of whom he wrote in *Somerset Essays*, delighting in the man's exclamations of naive wonderment. Always he remembered his simple village friends on his travels. As he relates in *A Pagan's Pilgrimage*, he brought back a bottle of water taken from Jacob's Well for the old shepherd of West Chaldon, who seemed little impressed by the present till, months afterwards, asked how he occupied his time during nights of lonely waiting in the lambing season, he produced from his pocket a copy of the Gospel of St. John and said, 'I do read in here about this well, what I do have the water of tucked away safe by Mother in back of cupboard.'

He enjoyed the usual summer visits of old friends, first Rivers Pollock, then Bernie O'Neill, and in early August his brother Bertie, who superintended the excavating operations described in 'A Bronze Age Valley' in *Somerset Essays*. Later in August he and Alyse stayed with Littleton at Sherborne. On their return they found Louis Wilkinson and Ann Reid installed at Chydyok. This lonely house on the downs was divided in two, Gertrude and Katie living in one half, while Llewelyn and Alyse now decided to make their home in the other. Already it was partly furnished when lent to Louis and his wife.

The main reason for the move was economy. The sales of Llewelyn's books were more than disappointing. 'I cannot imagine *Impassioned Clay* selling even so many as *A Pagan's Pilgrimage*,' he wrote on 6th October to Rivers Pollock, 'and that book starved



Chydyok—home of Llewelyn Powys, 1931-1936

me.' His foreboding was unhappily justified. A general election is always a distraction deplored by the publishing world, and the publication of *Impassioned Clay* in the autumn of 1931 coincided with one of the most hysterical general elections in history, when politicians addressed their appeal to the basest instincts of a commercial civilization. Everybody was too busily thinking of their bank balances to bother with the philosophy of living. Llewelyn now suffered also from recognition of his distinction as a writer of prose. As a polished writer on subjects about which few people thought, much less talked, he was labelled 'highbrow' and therefore ignored, not only by library subscribers, but by people of some intellectual pretension, who nevertheless confessed to a liking for 'thrillers' as recreative reading. The *Times Literary Supplement* thus recognized his quality:

Certainly this book will appeal most to those who can respond to its point of view; but it will also delight all who appreciate a robust and fine (perhaps sometimes rather self-consciously fine) prose of a quality so consistently sustained that no brief quotation can render its accumulative effect of integrity, true seriousness, and depth of thought and feeling.

But while acknowledging that 'there is nothing ignoble, there is much that is beautiful, in such a creed,' the reviewer made it clear that he was not one who could respond to Llewelyn's point of view. Less discriminating reviewers did not hesitate to deride his poetic faith as a limited outlook, an ironic attitude in evident supporters of a system under which millions endured a soul-destroying existence in pursuit of temporal advancement by distasteful and degrading drudgery. In December 1931 Llewelyn wrote to Arthur Ficke that, 'in the opinion of the commonalty,' *Impassioned Clay* was 'not worth a rush or a cherry stone.'

It has not sold 300 copies in England and I am as good as ruined. . . . I can't tell why these devils should shut their ears to my words, for there is wisdom in them, I swear it.

Though his consumption was apparently quiescent, he suffered continually from digestive trouble, with frequent headaches and bouts of dizziness. With the failure of the book that seemed to summarize his message to the world, following such harbingers as *The Cradle of God* and *The Pathetic Fallacy*, he had no heart to begin another book. One of his last letters from the White Nose announced to Rivers Pollock his removal to Chydyok:

It is our intention on November 1st to move into Gertrude's cottage. We would then have got down as low as possible and will be in a position to let these storms

blow over. You predicted lean days ahead and I find it true. With this drastic economy I believe I shall not feel the pinch but will be able to drink port and be merry and let the rest sweat in the heat of these hard times. . . . I think it is very good of Alyse to agree to this fall in our standard of living. It is a shame, but often it is more happy to go down than up.

Characteristically he threw all his energies into the enjoyment of making a new home. As he told Arthur Ficke, he was 'still merry' washing dishes and chopping sticks for the morning fire. His brother Theodore had always found chopping sticks a pastime compatible with solitary meditation, and Llewelyn told Ann Reid on 28th November:

I sometimes think I shall not write any more ever. I spend my time in chopping sticks, and consult with Theodore of this art, which he declares dangerous and says even the scriptures refer to the 'dangers of the man who cleaveth wood!'

Their first visitor at Chydyok was his brother Bertie, to whom Alyse wrote with pleasant anticipation a little damped by memories of the draught-board contest at Montoma:

Lulu says he is going over to get the draughts board to-morrow so as to be all ready, but I don't like that very much. I know well the look of your two silent absorbed backs.

But on this occasion Bertie's professional advice was eagerly sought on plans for structural alterations and for laying out the garden. 'Bertie has been staying with us,' Llewelyn wrote to Louis Wilkinson on 7th December. 'He is a fine emphatic talker.' Against the spelling of the name Chydyok 'Brother Positive' argued with accustomed tenacity. On the envelope of a letter giving Llewelyn information about the old roads of South Somerset he wrote:

Remember before Hardy told you the White Nose was the White Nose I told you so & that, before you are told by another to whom you will listen, *Chideock* is *Chideock*. Don't 'monkey' with place names. The interest you shew in the old Montacute roads tells that it is well in you to respect old evidence of history & never to distort it except under real pressure of conquest, chance, or economics. A. R. P.

Once he returned a letter of Llewelyn's with a rebuke written on its back:

I do so wish you'd write with a determination that each word will be easily legible. You can't think how provoking it is to be held up at every fifth or tenth word to study it for as long a time as it would take to go into the study to get Father's Greek dictionary & look up the word striving to remember what verb it comes from & knowing that to look it up simply & directly would be useless. It is really provoking & takes much pleasure from me.

Reading after nearly thirty years a letter of Llewelyn's from Africa Louis Wilkinson remarked with surprise the legibility of the handwriting. Accustomed to the crabbed scrawl of Llewelyn's latter years, written as he lay in bed, he had forgotten the clarity of his earlier handwriting. Though often minute for economy of space, the handwriting in his early diaries is much more legible than in the letters of his last years.

Christmas Day of 1931 was spent at home, Llewelyn breaking stones for a garden path before they were joined at dinner by Gertrude and Katie. On New Year's Eve, till Gertrude and Katie came in at midnight, they were writing in the same room together, Alyse working on one of the first of those discerning critical studies that were to appear too rarely in literary periodicals during subsequent years, Llewelyn on *Now that the Gods are Dead*. This long essay expressive of his philosophy was inspired by a request from the young American artist, Lynd Ward, that Llewelyn should write something to be illustrated by himself and issued as the first publication of the Equinox Press, a co-operative enterprise of enthusiasts in New York. To this request he replied:

I am very complimented to think that you should think of bringing out something of mine as the first publication of your original and exciting enterprise. I will try to write a 'work' within the next two months and send it to you. Oh! it delights me to hear that there is a group of young people who read what I write—sitting in this cottage, breaking up stones, chopping sticks, and walking over the downs—I often feel that my writing has been utterly in vain, winning appreciation only from those I dislike or despise. It enchants me, this prospect of appearing in your list—with girls and boys to print and bind and illustrate the volume. It is to me a project full of grace.

This task broke the spell of literary inactivity. When it was done, he began to select passages from the works of the seventeenth-century Oxford scholar, Anthony à Wood, resulting in a volume with a prefatory essay, *The Life and Times of Anthony à Wood*, published later in the year by Wishart.

At the end of January they were saddened and shocked by the sudden death of Ann Reid. She and Louis had been looking for a house in North Devon when she was taken ill and died within a few days in a hotel at Watchet. She had published two novels, *We are the Dead* and *Love Lies Bleeding*, but while they appreciated her exceptional talents, Llewelyn and Alyse loved her for the charm of her mind, personality, and ingenuous grace. Llewelyn wrote to Louis:

I swear to you from all my life's observation of the love of people for each other

that your care of her was never, could never have been at fault since you first met her. And the chance of you two having found each other was an incredible dispensation, and you gave her a complete fulfilment of life. These swift years that you have been together were of a nature such as are experienced by few. Whenever I saw you together, I knew it. Oh she was so happy with you, nobody else could have protected her, nobody else poured toward her so strong and passionate a love. We are none of us likely to see another girl of such a form and of such a character. Her sweetness and candour of nature will never be repeated and she had true genius! Oh, Louis, my darling, what can I say! What can I do! I sit before the fire like one stunned for I did love her so deeply. If you think my coming to you would be of any help, send me a telegram or letter, or if you could only feel you were able to stay with us for the first few weeks so we could all talk of her and plan out the future as she would have planned it out. . . . You must remember that we long to be of any help, even if it were to lift your anguish for a moment.

Louis came to stay for some weeks during February and March, and Reginald Marsh also made a visit at about the same time. On 8th April Llewelyn and Alyse started on the pilgrimage to Ann Reid's grave at Watchet, described in the exquisite essay, 'On the Other Side of the Quantocks,' in *Earth Memories*. Of this expedition he wrote to Bertie:

We stayed at the Carew Arms and walked along the Quantocks to Watchet. We were lucky in seeing red deer which I have never done before on the Quantocks. We stayed the second night in the old part of Minehead near the harbour and the next day at Lyme Regis walking from there to the Golden Cap and taking a bus from Chideock. We had a fortunate excursion in spite of the uncertain weather.

He took great pains, as with all his work, in making selections from Anthony à Wood, and in April he still had 'to do a great deal of work' on it. While spending much time in his garden, he also wrote numerous essays, varying from the story of the Quantock trip to the studies of Lucretius and Thomas Deloney afterwards included in *Rats in the Sacristy* and the moral dissertations of *Damnable Opinions*. Some of the last were contributed to *The American Spectator* at the invitation of Theodore Dreiser, who was then connected with the periodical. After the publication of *The Life and Times of Anthony à Wood* Llewelyn wrote to John in October 1932:

I have sent Dreiser an article of the fierce kind that you indicated. The Cockerel Press are going to bring out another essay of 9,000 words. I have been successful with articles lately in England but they pay so badly that I could not live by it. *Anthony à Wood* had the leading article in the *Times* but I do not believe it is selling much. I get £50 out of it.

The essay of nine thousand words, of similar length to *Now that the Gods are Dead*, was the masterly statement of his poetic faith, ex-

pressed in truly Landorian prose, called *Glory of Life*, published at Christmas of 1933 in a limited edition by the Golden Cockerel Press, with woodcuts by Robert Gibbings.

Despite the disappointing reception of *Impassioned Clay* by reviewers and the reading public, Llewelyn began to find that his work had the genuine appreciation of discriminating freethinkers. The stalwart rebel, Theodore Dreiser, welcomed his 'sling shots,' and another novelist of the elder generation, Eden Phillpotts, wrote to express his liking for *Impassioned Clay*. Lynd Ward was among the first of many younger men to recognize Llewelyn as a revolutionary revivalist, or, as Llewelyn modestly described himself, 'the latest exponent' of 'a tradition as old as human thought and which alone has been able to resist the Christian obsession.' His published *Letters* include many of wise counsel and encouragement to young people impressed by his writings. From India, as a young man of twenty-five, wrote K. R. Srinivasar Iyengar, who has since made a reputation as a writer and teacher and whose *Literature and Authorship in India* is a contribution to a better understanding of his country by the English. Clifford Musgrave, custodian of the public library at Yeovil, and John Wallis, a young schoolmaster, each opened a correspondence developing warm personal friendship. Son of a schoolmaster, John Wallis found himself in revolt against the inhibitions of 'a respectable and secluded middle-class family.' 'Llewelyn's uncompromising devotion to personal freedom and to the natural joys of living affected me very powerfully,' he writes. 'I fell completely under his spell, as I think everyone who ever met him must have done, and I felt encouraged and liberated in spirit.' He took his fiancée to see Llewelyn, who counselled them to marry as soon as possible and face together the hazards of 'love in a cottage.' When they did marry, he wrote to them the letter of wise counsel, a model of guidance to a young couple of artistic tastes starting life together, which appears in his published *Letters*. Like other followers of Llewelyn's philosophy, John Wallis found 'something of a dilemma between the detachment required of such a lover of life as Llewelyn was, and the demands of society upon the individual to play his part and make his contribution to the work and well-being of the world.' The system of commercial servitude does not make it easy for rebels to escape its thralldom. Llewelyn emphasized the need for emancipation 'from the market place and from the trivialities and baseness of contemporary fashions.' 'He was uncompromisingly on the

side of freedom and detachment, with two conditions—that one should make enough money to support this freedom in a simple and natural way of living, and that one should, as “a well-descended spirit,” relieve suffering wherever it existed and at whatever cost.’ John Wallis writes after the passage of years:

I owe almost entirely to his friendship and influence a love and regard for the Glory of Life that has enriched some trying occasions and circumstances, and has given to both of us so many golden hours of happiness. One always came away from Llewelyn encouraged and invigorated. I owe to him also a being set square on the earth, for I was inclined to dabble on the airy metaphysical side of fancifulness.

Early in August 1932 Llewelyn and Alyse spent a night at Max Gate, where they met Dr. Marie Stopes and H. M. Tomlinson. Louis Wilkinson stayed for some weeks at Chaldon in August and September; at the end of his visit Llewelyn and Alyse went to London. There he called on Frank Whitaker, the editor of *John o' London's Weekly*, who remembers him as ‘a great, gaunt, craggy man, with an outsize hat, outsize inverness, outsize stick, and outsize wrist-joints.’ Frank Whitaker’s impression of Llewelyn’s stature suggests a sense of his dominating personality, for he was not exceptionally tall, like John, who, as Louis Wilkinson remarked on reading the description, might well have been described as ‘great’ and ‘gaunt,’ with ‘outsize wrist-joints.’ But the suggestion of ‘gauntness’ unhappily indicated Llewelyn’s alarming loss of weight at this time.

For the past year he had suffered continually from headache and digestive trouble, with disconcerting palpitation of the heart. Once after lunch, as he wrote to Bertie on 4th July, he ‘had a sudden attack of giddiness and sickness, very mysterious and the nearest to fainting that I have ever experienced.’ On his return from London, after an attack when he vomited blood, he was persuaded to see a doctor, who diagnosed a stomach ulcer. To Rivers Pollock he wrote of the consultation:

I went to the doctor about my heart and had some fine chat about my health. . . . He says I must only eat soft food and that his purpose was to keep me out of the grave, which was well said. He made an indirect fly-away reference to cancer, that stomach ulcers were good ground for such frolic invasions, and when I protested that tuberculous subjects were safe from these indispositions he told me that I was mistaken.

This flippant account was an under-statement of the doctor’s solemn warning to follow a strict diet, as irritation of the ulcer might induce

mortal bleeding, or even cancer. Since coming to Chydyok he had unfortunately relaxed the abstinence from fats that had relieved his headaches at the White Nose. Fearing loss of weight as the usual prelude to a bout with his old enemy, he habitually ate a large breakfast of porridge with cream, bacon, and several cups of coffee with milk, followed by a substantial mid-day meal always ending with his favourite rice pudding. It was on the day of his having reluctantly proposed to resign cream with his porridge that he vomited blood.

In spite of care with his diet, he suffered from headaches and occasional dizziness, so that he had to lie down. About this time his brother Theodore asked, 'If you could die this moment without pain, without knowledge that you were going to die, would you accept the opportunity?' Theodore said that he himself would accept with relief and gratitude, but Llewelyn vigorously declared that he would accept any future uncertainty rather than part with life. At the time of his depression after the publication of *Impassioned Clay* Llewelyn derived much comfort from Theodore, who had so long endured want of due recognition for his work, and made notes of conversations with his brother. 'Everybody ought to be glad if old people or very young people can be happy,' said Theodore, speaking of the conventional advocates of repression: 'I would rather be dead than have my writing commended by such people.' In the matter of self-government for India he ironically remarked: 'No philosopher need trouble about who governs. For us it is a good thing that the English are in India, it keeps unpleasant people out of the country.'

Llewelyn was the first to appreciate the quality of John's great novel, *A Glastonbury Romance*. 'The longest novel ever written and the best,' he wrote to Louis Wilkinson:

Truly I think it is wonderful—more bawdy, more blasphemous than anything any of us have yet written and yet a deeply religious book, so thickly religious that it swallows the Anglican faith as if it were a gnat—swallows up Christianity itself as though it were a single egg of caviare. I have been absorbed in it, though I believe you would not like it, would doubtless make sport of it—nay, like Theodore, would 'not be able to read such stuff made up of Galsworthy, Lawrence, Joyce.'

Though Llewelyn's opinion was endorsed by Edward Garnett, Hugh Walpole, Gerald Barry, Ralph Straus, Edwin Muir, J. D. Beresford, and Gerald Bullett among English critics, London publishers shrank from its length. After its publication in America in the spring of

1932, Llewelyn undertook on John's behalf negotiations for its English publication, but it had several rejections before eventual publication by the Bodley Head in July 1933.

Early in December Llewelyn was well enough to accept an invitation to the luncheon at Merton College, Oxford, in honour of Anthony à Wood's tercentenary. Having small experience of such festivities, he was shocked by the company's lack of sympathy with the man whose memory it was assembled to celebrate. Instead of some man of letters capable of appreciating Wood, the Vice-Chancellor of the university, a superannuated politician, was in the chair, and blandly assured a complaisant audience that he 'knew of Wood only through a recent article in *The Times Literary Supplement*, from which he had gathered that his writings were not suitable for reading aloud.' The impertinent fatuity of parading such ignorance to people assembled because they presumably thought a man's memory worthy of honour after three hundred years seems to have occurred to nobody but Llewelyn. In 'Merton Wood's Luncheon,' included in *Earth Memories*, he wrote a lively satirical account, which Wood himself would have approved, of this 'very half-hearted and grudging tercentenary festival.'

In his published *Letters* a letter to Rivers Pollock tells of this Oxford visit, and he wrote also to his friend James Venn:

The luncheon was amusing but Oxford has a long memory and I detected an inclination to disassociate themselves from Wood. At any rate they stressed the fact that Wood was never a fellow of the college and was turned out of the common room and expelled from the university. I think my abridgement, so frank and frolic, fluttered their poultry yard and perhaps seemed to threaten their sense of security. . . . They seemed mincing and worldly. . . . I got away as soon as I could to the chapel and stood over Wood's grave. I could have told his ghost that Merton had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. . . . On Sunday we went to the Golden Cockerel Press to see Robert Gibbings. He appeared out of his printing house all bearded and golden like a printing Vulcan in the cold winter fields. He is going to bring out an essay of mine in the same magnificent format as his Gospels.'

This was his first meeting with Robert Gibbings, who illustrated *Glory of Life* and *The Twelve Months*. A third collaboration was planned, comprising five essays, on 'The Book of Praise,' 'Ecclesiasticus,' 'The Book of Job,' 'The Song of Solomon, and 'The Book of Common Prayer,' to be called *The Poetry of God* and dedicated 'to the Glory of God and to the Memories of our two Fathers, the Rev. Canon Edward Gibbings and the Rev. Charles Francis Powys.' The essays were written and the last included in *Somerset Essays*, but

the book never appeared owing to Robert Gibbings's abandoning his connection with the Golden Cockerel Press.

At Oxford Llewelyn caught a cold, affecting his chest and confining him to bed till after Christmas, but on New Year's Day he walked with Robert Gibbings to lunch with Louis Wilkinson at West Lulworth. Of this first of several visits to Chydyok Robert Gibbings writes:

I remember his enthusiasm for everything as we walked together on the downs. He was so essentially natural. Even his movements had the easy swing of an animal. Yet, close as he was to nature, one felt at times that he was entirely disembodied. There was something elfin about him. I shouldn't have been surprised if I had seen him disappear into the ground at any moment. . . . He seemed utterly content with his Dorset hills. All that his soul needed he could draw from them. They certainly gave him a grandeur of personality, a grandeur that seemed to spread about him like a wide aura of light.

Some days later Llewelyn attended the christening of Theodore's adopted daughter, but he was not well enough to accompany Alyse to Wool to see his sister Katie off on a visit to Africa. As he wrote at this time to John, he was 'always under some menace,' and anxiety was the air breathed by Alyse. His shelter was moved from the downs to the garden, so that he had no distance to walk in bad weather. His continued digestive trouble frequently compelled him to lie down with sick headaches. But as soon as he felt well, he infected everybody with his radiant happiness, and exulted in his observations of nature, the budding of flowers, the flight of birds, glimpses of animal life on the cliffs and downs. Asked how he could reconcile himself, with his belief in no survival, to the knowledge of illness and death, he said we had to reflect that all was anyway lost and present happiness was given to us like a miracle.

His volume of collected essays was rejected in April 1933 by Harcourt, Brace. Published in London in 1934 by the Bodley Head as *Earth Memories*, it was not till 1938 that a book of his essays appeared in America—from the firm of W. W. Norton. 'I still pick up a penny or two with the Magazines,' he wrote to John on 14th April, 'but my books don't bring in anything.' Youth, to whom he addressed his message, too *blasé* even to make love to the partners of their languid fox-trotting, could not respond to the passion and poetry of his appeal. He offended the orthodox by his atheism and candour, and materialists despised his imagination as fantastic, his themes as 'highbrow.' Detesting the disillusion and apathy that

gnawed like a maggot at the vitals of modern youth, he lost no opportunity of attacking those writers who seemed to him to condone or encourage the disease. Of 'T. S. Eliot: The Tutor-Poet' in the *Week-End Review* of 20th May, 1933, he wrote:

This poetical man-about-town lacks the sap, vigour, sensuality, that come from being in direct contact with nature. He presents us with a striking example of that morbidity of vision so often belonging to those who dwell too much under the shadow of smoky dwarf chimneys. It is for this reason that he is so easily offended by the 'stealth of lusty nature' and is eager to direct his intellectual acumen towards elucidating the darker secrets of the aesthetic process, by which means he not only restores his self-respect, but finds access to sheltered cloisters of escape. Indeed, it is this academic evasiveness that has made it possible for him to seek protection behind the fashionable altars of the High Church party. His theories of criticism are the expression of a sophisticated, attenuated personality which, fearful of the impact of strong stormy life, takes refuge in the airy structures of the mind inherited out of the past, where thought has been piled upon thought, higher, higher. Here, at last out of reach of indecorum and riot, he is at liberty to elaborate his narrow dogmas.

Mr. Eliot has a nature sufficiently intense to recognize that the emotions at his command are not powerful enough to find immediate and careless expression, but must be presented with the utmost caution, with the utmost restraint, with the utmost effect. It is for this reason he disparages emotional writing just as a penguin might disparage the flight of a herring gull. It is an old weakness of scholarship, of classicism, this setting up of form and erudition against inspiration and originality. . . . With his literary exercises Mr. Eliot is the tidy, well-disciplined Gabbitts-Thring tutor of our day, and shares all the refined distastes of a drawing-room corner convert. He, with his 'aetherial rumours,' is 'the predestined herdsman of the sick herd.'

The article invoked protest from correspondents both in the *Week-End Review* and privately. To Bertie he wrote:

You are perfectly right about Eliot's essays. There is of course much more of value in him than my article suggested. . . . The article was written chiefly to check his influence which I really do deplore.

And to Clifford Musgrave he acknowledged: 'I recognize in his work an original and unpleasant poet of the second order and respect him more than I did.'

While he wrote against the cardinal contemporary sin of apathy and occasionally exclaimed against the critical bankruptcy of reviewers, his happy temperament precluded such dejection as followed the chill reception of *Impassioned Clay*. To Louis Wilkinson he wrote on 7th July, 1933:

This morning I am in a most villainous mood, ready to worry about matters that do not call for worry as in the old days at Cambridge. I would be ashamed to tell

you the kind of thoughts. I seem always to be *underpaid*, *underpaid*, *underpaid* but I suppose that is a universal plaint—and probably in fact I am *overpaid*, *overpaid*, *overpaid*, considering how easily I work and pleasantly I live and how well I live. I do not know how one rids one's mind of *mean* thoughts—I think by detachment, by holding one's thoughts in those 'water-tight compartments' you used to teach me about at Cambridge. But Lord! I am the King of *Worriers*.

In May, reading Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua* for his essay on the Oxford Movement in *Damnable Opinions*, he was so impressed that he wrote a separate essay on Newman. He said it was 'satisfactory to think that literature triumphed in the end, and that Cardinal Manning who had been so astute and ambitious and mean was the one who was the loser.' As he taught in his writings, the pursuit of truth was its own reward in life, but he could find ingenuous pleasure in the reflection that posterity usually redressed contemporary injustice.

He lived simply, but the shortest excursion, the smallest present, was an extravagant luxury. 'My very best work now goes to the *Dorset Echo*, an extravagance I can ill afford,' he wrote at this time to W. H. Dibben, 'but it is a whim.' Wishing to write about the countryside he loved, he chose to write what he wanted to write for small reward, with the occasional chance of having an essay accepted by the *Spectator*, *Cornhill Magazine*, or *Manchester Guardian*, rather than to submit to the degrading vexation of suiting his work to prescribed editorial requirements.

It was in May that he visited the basket-makers at Dorchester and was pleased to be recognized as 'one of the sons of the Rev. C. F. Powys,' as he describes in the essay on 'Dorchester Characters.' It was nearly twenty months before he was again to visit Dorchester. In early June he went with Alyse for ten days to Dartmoor, recording his observations in the essay on 'Dartmoor' in *Somerset Essays*. In seeking foods soothing to his digestion, Alyse had assembled a small library of books on diet, and after reading Reddie Mallet's book, *Nature's Remedy or Nature's Cure*, Llewelyn decided to eat mainly fruit and nuts and vegetables. Immediately he began to put on weight and became free from headaches. 'I have now been on this new diet for six weeks,' he told John in June: 'It is wonderful. I regard the discovery of it as an important event in my life.' But the prescribed treatment included sun-bathing, an unwise indulgence for consumptives.

With his temperamental ingenuousness and intensity, like a boy

practising a novel feat of skill, Llewelyn threw his interest and energies whole-heartedly into all he undertook, and, always venturesome when he felt well, he forgot one enemy in delight at defeating the other. 'I walk naked over the hills delighting in the summer sunshine,' he told John. As he had been abroad in 1921, this English summer of 1933 was the finest and hottest he had known since the *Skin for Skin* summer of 1911. 'This is the happiest summer of my life,' he said.

But after returning from Dartmoor he had a bout of blood spitting. To Bertie he wrote:

I am now in bed with an obstinate temperature, immediately, I dare say, brought on by our long walks, though I have been conscious of an increase of coughing for several months now. It is teasing to me that I should be caught napping so easily after all my experience. I suppose I became over confident as my attention was largely taken up with my other ills, but I certainly should not have allowed so long a period to have gone by without taking my temperature. I daresay I shall now have to stay in bed for several weeks if not months and even possibly go abroad in the autumn.

But he was up on 26th June, and attributing his chest affection, not to sun-bathing, but to too much walking, he strolled to Bat's Head and lay naked on the headland in the hot sunshine. His body grew brown, and free from indigestion, he delighted in the hot weather. But on 19th July he had the worst bout of blood-spitting since that at Jerusalem in 1928. After a week he was well again and resumed his happy enjoyment of the sunshine. 'How exultantly I honoured the sun that summer,' he wrote in *Love and Death*, 'god of triumphant life, rising in his giant's strength morning after morning.' Some time before he had been reading a book on Akhenaton, the sun-worshipper, subject of an essay in *Rats in the Sacristy*. 'How lovely are some of his hymns,' he wrote to Rivers Pollock, 'and how profound was his idea.'

On the night of 3rd August he went to bed in his shelter. The night air was so warm that he still wore no shirt. Rising in the small hours, he felt 'a tremor of high exhilaration' at the joy of being alive, as 'the soft wandering breath of the summer night touched my forehead.' He had been back in bed no more than half an hour when he woke again. 'I could feel that my chest was rapidly filling up with blood.'

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Struggle for Life—I

THE story of the succeeding weeks is told with the mounting poetic drama of a Sophoclean tragedy in *Love and Death*. After three days the blood was still coming. 'I am not afraid,' he said, and whispered instructions that his body should be buried with flexed knees, like the ancient Romans, without his arms crossed. At Alyse's request Bertie approached the appropriate authorities and Mr. Herbert Weld of Lulworth Castle for permission to have Llewelyn buried on the downs. Daily Gerald Brenan, a young writer who had married Gamel Woolsey and lived at Lulworth, drove over with ice from the fishmonger to be applied to Llewelyn's chest. Daily also he wrote a report to Bertie.

With his old tenacity he evaded the clutch of death. The doctor said that he had never known a patient capable of lying motionless for so many hours together. Inert he lay mustering every nerve to will cessation of the bleeding. Late in the month, though too weak to raise himself in bed, he wrote notes to John and to Rivers Pollock.

I have never been so ill before. I did not know I had so much blood. I found my philosophy held firm and my spirit was tranquil, but the physical degradation was shocking. My chest would get so full of blood that I could not breathe. Alyse was very brave and stood by me to carry the vessels away to bury in the ground of the garden. If I get well I hope for a long interval to pass before I receive such discipline again. It was the sun that did it, my lover and my God!

Alyse slept in a cot at his side. As soon as he could whisper a conversation, he talked of the philosophy of Epicurus and said that it was possible to subdue fear by reason. 'I did not find I feared death as I used to do,' he wrote to Theodore Dreiser late in September: 'however I "froze" waiting like a weasel for a chance to dash out of its sight through the first causeway I saw.'

On 30th September his long hair and beard, with grey amongst the gold, were trimmed; he stood up and walked slowly round his shelter. Late in October he was able to walk from the shelter to the house, and one morning, in his dressing gown, he went far enough for a glimpse of the distant sea. Lying in bed, he occupied himself with selecting passages from the works of Thomas Hearne for a

volume like *The Life and Times of Anthony à Wood*. He completed the book, but it has not been published.

Then he began to write *Life and Death*, as he originally entitled *Love and Death*. The year before, on 14th September, 1932, John had urged him, with 'such memories, so vivid, exact, imaginative and poetical of your early life, not to speak of later times,' to 'write another book in the style of *Skin for Skin*.'

I cannot see why you should not very leisurely, writing so much a day, compose a masterpiece of an Autobiography. You've only skimmed your impressions in what you've done already. You have written nothing of Sherborne, nothing really of Corpus, nothing except (just a few excerpts) of those long Montacute years. What pictures are there still in your brain untroubled, unapproached! There is a great gap, a great niche, a great lacuna, unfilled in literature of a real poetical & yet realistic & honest story of a person's life. Rousseau's doesn't quite fill it for various reasons, & Proust's is all mixed up with fiction. There is the gap, in all the shelves of all the immortal libraries, only waiting to be filled by the one person destined for such a task—the life of a man by a man.

John's conception of the great romantic autobiography was soon carried out by himself. As he lay 'freezing,' Llewelyn, as always in illness, allowed his mind to wander in the security of his Montacute boyhood, and he conceived a romantic love affair, such as he had longed for in his youth, set against the background of the life he recalled so vividly. He began to write the story, fiction against a background of fact, his memories stimulated by conversations with Dr. Wyndham Goodden, whose father had been Mr. Powys's predecessor as vicar of Montacute. He wrote to John asking for a name for his heroine; John suggested 'Dittany,' and Llewelyn, perhaps subconsciously reminded of Dimity Stone in *Wolf Solent*, called her Dittany Stone. But as he grew stronger the work was laid aside. Needing money to meet the expenses of illness, he returned to the writing of articles and essays. He wrote to Rivers Pollock in December:

I have been doing no writing except very short and utterly 'perfect' articles for the *Dorset Echo*. These do not seem to tire me. I have a mania for doing this. I like the idea of giving to the Dorset labourers and shepherds and furze cutters the very best writing and it thrills me when I hear of some essay being discussed in a Dorset tavern. I believe that such people have the gift of recognizing and appreciating a sound style.

He was cheered by the publication of the handsome limited edition of *Glory of Life* and by the news that *Earth Memories* was to be published by the Bodley Head. Willie, home from Africa, and Bertie

came to stay for Christmas with Gertrude, and they all went out to Llewelyn's shelter, with the wintry moonlight gleaming on white frost, to see the old year out on New Year's Eve. The long winter evenings emphasized the deprivations he suffered by his illness, as he had to lie in his open shelter, banished from cheerful conversation round the fireside. He now suffered much from weakness of the eyes, hindering his work and his reading. For long hours, often till she was numb with cold from sitting in the damp or frosty air, Alyse would read aloud to him. During his stay, Willie also took a share of the reading. He and Louis Wilkinson were Llewelyn's most dangerous visitors, for laughter was bad for his chest, and despite excellent intentions to observe warnings, their habit of enjoying his company would prove irresistible. 'The sight of Louis sends my fever up,' Llewelyn wrote to Bernie O'Neill: 'He causes my very intestines to crow like snakes in the breeding season.'

Frequently he suffered vicissitudes in his illness, terrifying to Alyse and to Gertrude, who shared the burden of nursing. One morning they ran out on hearing his call to find that, attacked by dizziness as he stooped to wash his face, he had fallen to the ground. Bouts of blood-spitting brought dread of haemorrhage, his strength being too enfeebled to survive further loss of blood. During a crisis he would have Alyse close by his bedside, and Gertrude took her place whenever she left to snatch a few hours of rest. Concentrating every effort of will to cling to life, he drew strength from their presence. Such periods were exhausting to them, but however tired, they would smile at his rewarding gaiety and loving gratitude as soon as he received respite from attack. With relief from immediate danger he became always optimistic 'I have planted my fruit trees in the garden,' he wrote to Van Wyck Brooks, 'for the secret is to live each day as if it were your last *and* as if you were going to live forever!' When Gertrude went away for a few days, he wrote to her:

We miss you very much. I miss you very much. I can never forget how lovely you have been to me during these months when I have been so helpless. I will remember all your words. The kitten shall not sleep near my chest and I will go along very slowly to the house.

In April he was able to enjoy a visit from Edna St. Vincent Millay and Eugen Boissevain, who came to England to see him on their way back to America from France. Gerald Brenan brought David Garnett one day, 'a smooth urbane chap, like his style light, lucid, and charming.' Louis Wilkinson came to stay in the village, and Llewelyn

wrote to Willie: 'Louis will send my temperature up quick and lively, but I think I am better and have now been rid of blood for a week or more.'

Swan's Milk, containing Louis's poignant personal reminiscences of the Powys family, was about to appear, and Llewelyn wrote an appreciation for quotation on its dust-wrapper.

If an international, unmilitaristic civilization, happy and hedonistic, waits upon the dissolution of our more cowardly herd instincts, *Swan's Milk* is a book of the greatest cultural value. The moral energy latent in its shameless pages is enormous. Every topic that the 'right-minded' would wish to be left out is treated by Mr. Marlow with particular interest, vigour and veracity. Although I personally resented several of Mr. Marlow's references to my own family and was 'deeply hurt' by his malicious misrepresentation of my brother John, I scarcely remember ever having read a book with more relish and entertainment. It is utterly free of cant and utterly outrageous. I have no hesitation in saying that *Swan's Milk* is brilliant and outstanding and will remain for many years an important landmark in biographical-autobiographical writing.

On receiving an advance copy of the book, he was dismayed to find that his qualifying clause, about resenting 'references to my own family' and 'being deeply hurt' by the remarks on John, had been omitted. Knowing that some of his family were unlikely to feel the same tolerance of personalities as John and himself, and that 'Of course everybody will say "It was you Llewelyn who gave this irreverent ranter entrance to the 'hallowed garden' of Montacute,"' he wrote to Louis in humorous but vigorous protest against the suppression.

. . . the blame of all this will come upon me, and the tiniest protest I care to make ignored as if 'I were a goose.' This seems to me extraordinarily unlike you with your far-famed interest in objective justice. I have always recognized the fact since the publication of *The Buffoon* that you intended to revenge yourself upon Jack subtly and insidiously in season and out of season—with 'I mean no harm, Master' always upon your lips . . . well I certainly cannot but relish the moral audacity of the book. . . . I send you my great love.

As appears in Llewelyn's published *Letters*, Louis, who ever relished truth against himself as fearlessly as he wrote it of others, was guiltless of the suppression, and immediately requested and obtained its reinstatement by the publishers. At once Llewelyn was not merely appeased but repentant.

It was gross of me to think you could have been involved and deep in my heart I did not think it. . . . Now that I know *for certain* you were as innocent as I over the matter, Good God! I think nothing of it, cancelled and gone. . . . It is a book

such as none of your contemporaries would have dared to have written. . . . You are a very rare example of a man *who is not afraid of the herd*. I have never met another like you. I honour you, Archangel.

Swan's Milk was published on the day before 'my own poor "gentlemanly essays,"' as Llewelyn described *Earth Memories*, which appeared with woodcut illustrations by his sister Gertrude.

Whenever he seemed to be improving in health, there was anxiety lest he should overtax his strength by writing. Alyse wrote frequent reports of his progress to Arthur Ficke, who, as a fellow-sufferer from consumption, replied with advice on treatment both to her and to Llewelyn. When she asked 'whether stretching his arm out as often as he does to get his books and papers is bad for him,' he urged Llewelyn to concentrate entirely for a year on getting well. 'I intend to follow your words as close as I can,' replied Llewelyn, 'but I do not think I could manage to rest a year without work.' Thinking to remove any financial incentive to work, Arthur Ficke generously offered a loan, but Llewelyn replied cheerfully:

I have arranged with my bank to let me overdraw and when I have used up £100 I will sell enough to cover the loss and then may ask you for your £100 to lessen my sense of impending ruin and retard the rate of *money melting* until such a time as I can begin to restore my fortunes. I know that this will be an unjustifiable concession to a money nervousness inherited directly from a long line of disreputable ancestors, distinguished by respectable thrift, which made them choose as our family motto the unsocial words Parta Tueri, that means I am told *Keep what you have got*. . . . *Earth Memories* has been productive of £25 in advance royalties and it is possible (though unlikely) that I might get more for it, as it has been extraordinarily well reviewed. *Glory of Life*, though I have no contract signed, is supposed to pay me between £40 and £50. I am writing essays for the *Dorset Echo* twice a month for which I get £2 2 0 and the certain receipts in a year would make up a second £100. . . . Now as I get better I shall be able to engage myself with occasional articles. . . . I have thought I had better go into these matters in some detail in fairness to you, but I can't tell you how charming I think it is of you to protect me at this juncture in my life.

On 2nd May Alyse reported progress:

He has done nothing indiscreet, is still in bed and very quiet. But a continued spell of close, foggy, humid weather has started his expectoration up again, and his temperature is insidiously rising, and he tastes the old taste, and feels a little nervous. He has to wear dark glasses and have a screen to shield the light from him and I think the depression caused by this trouble with his eyes has had a distinctly depressing effect on him. I know it is important not to get stampeded and he has every care here—always being out of doors, with people to read to him, the only food that he can digest, interests to occupy his mind—the only thing lacking the right quality of air, for in my experience with Lulu I have noticed that

with his chest weather makes more difference than any other thing. Do you think if the spring here proves hard for him we ought to go to Switzerland? We would both hate it, aside from the fact that it would be so expensive, but do give me your advice. I think he has a secret dread of another haemorrhage. Yesterday and the day before his temperature was a little above 99, but he looks as if he had essential health. He goes in every day to the bathroom, a minute's walk up and down an incline.

In June, having at last severed his bondage to lecturing, John returned to seek a permanent home in England, and temporarily settled at a farmhouse near Chaldon called Rat's Barn, owned by his brother Willie. 'Every day he comes to read to me *Paradise Lost*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Tom Deloney,' wrote Llewelyn to Lynd Ward: 'It has been a great happiness having him and he holds my mind and body up with the power of his mighty Merlin's spirit.' To his sister-in-law, Mrs. Homer Byington, he wrote:

My brother John is here established in a cottage with Phyllis over the hill. If he stays it will be the crown of my life. He seems well and his spiritual vitality is enormous and his flame undimmed. Yesterday I attacked him for giving his support to the religious idealists who to the misfortune of the world always associate religion with their own Parish morals. He agreed that true religion had nothing to do with morals. The Greek religion had nothing to do with morals—and then putting back his noble head he looked at me with a proud smile full of a wise irony. 'I like,' he said 'to associate religion with immorality.' I do love him and honour him so much and I cannot believe that with such a witch doctor abroad on the downs any great misfortune can come to me.

After a quarter of a century the brothers still debated religion, the poetic attitude to life, and the soul's survival, with the same eagerness as when they had sat within sight of Dr. Price's pleasant garden among the tombstones of Tintinhull churchyard. In the previous year Llewelyn had strongly criticized John's *Philosophy of Solitude*. All his life he counselled the strength of restraint, rebuking what he regarded as a tendency to prolixity and repetition in John's writing, but in this case, besides reproving him for writing 'a little carelessly,' he objected to some of his moral contentions.

I think your attacks, especially in the case of psycho-analysis, are not controlled enough, too emotional and dancing, and for this reason, as Bertie would say, 'weak and unconvincing.' I am sure you are wrong to give the conventional churches your support. I think half the misery of the world comes directly or indirectly from them and especially is this so in England. They are on the side of the oppressors and are always unimaginative, and complacent, and worldly. They do mischief and make unhappiness by their pinched view of life. I think you hedge here—Master Sit on the Fence, Master Hop! Hop! But God you do write nobly when you are writing

under inspiration. I find myself as enthralled, fascinated by your genius as ever I used to be when for my own sake I was so precious of your life and would bring you sanatogen and pick up the bowls on your lawn lest you should hurt yourself by stooping. But do, I beg you, take more trouble.

To these arguments they returned in conversation, and Llewelyn revived them when he read John's *Autobiography* this summer.

But a serious relapse delayed his delivery of these comments. Though reading imposed too severe a strain on his eyes, he was able to write, and he wrote indefatigably whenever possible. 'I have just been paid for an article I wrote for the *Daily Herald* 7 guineas,' he wrote gleefully to Rivers Pollock, 'and on the strength of this have hired a labourer at 34/- a week to lengthen my terrace so I shall have a flat walk for exercise, and also to dig for me a little fish pool.' His neglect of Arthur Ficke's advice to concentrate on complete rest incurred disaster. On 23rd July, almost exactly a year after his bad attack of blood-spitting, he suffered another serious haemorrhage.

Again followed weeks of racking anxiety, while he lay hour after hour in stoical stillness, summoning every nerve to sidestep his enemy's onslaught. After three weeks he was still coughing up clots of blood. Every day John came to relieve Alyse's attendance at the bedside, always sensitively considerate, as when one night he came running back from the village with a bottle of Burgundy to soothe the neuralgia now afflicting Alyse as the inevitable legacy of her incessant anxiety.

By the end of August his blood-spitting had ceased, and though pathetically fragile in appearance, he was in good spirits and immediately writing again. 'I am thinking of publishing my *Dorset Echo* papers in a book like *Earth Memories*, only illustrated with photographs instead of woodcuts,' he wrote to Bertie.

The Essays are all of them harmless and might help me to face my decline and fall, being more to the taste of nervous people. Dr. Goodden is taking the photographs for me and we propose to dedicate the volume to

The Rev. C. Goodden (Vicar of Montacute 1840-1885).

The Rev. C. F. Powys (Vicar of Montacute 1886-1918).

To his disappointment John had decided against making his home in Dorset, having no head for heights and disliking the steep cliffs. On 4th October Llewelyn wrote to Arthur Ficke:

It has been wonderful having John but he and Phyllis are leaving Rats Barn on Monday to go into winter quarters in Dorchester where they have taken an attic

for 12/- a week over a grocer's shop. . . . His autobiography is wonderfully good. . . . My eyes have been a little better, and have been able to do some writing, so have felt more content, though I have not yet got as far as the house since my last sickness. . . . I wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt asking her to beg her husband to make some alliance of a democratic kind to counteract the publicity of the upstart tyrants of Europe, and received to my astonishment a personal letter from *Your President* very friendly but explaining that he must 'take one hurdle at a time.'

To Rivers Pollock Llewelyn related how 'I was so exasperated at the wild sayings of Mussolini, that "only by bloody effort could men stay in the sun," and of Hitler that man was a "beast of prey," etc., that I wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt, who had once written to me about my books, asking her in her bed chamber to beg the President to make some utterance on behalf of Democracy to which everybody of liberal opinions could rally all over the world, and yesterday I received such a friendly letter from Roosevelt himself, concerned about my eyes and telling me he must take "one hurdle at a time," but presently he will arrange a counter offensive, and enclosing a copy of his private message to Congressmen which he "hoped I would like." ' From the White House on 14th June, 1934, President Roosevelt had written:

My dear Mr. Powys:

I am sorry indeed to learn about the overstraining of your eyes and I trust that you are giving them full opportunity to 'come back' and let you start on your excellent work again.

I, too, am distressed by the shallowness of the preachings of many of those who are high in authority. Perhaps liberal thought will best be served by letting them rave on for a while before we undertake a successful counter-offensive. I have, as you can well understand, a horror of being accused of preaching. I think I can be of most service by the development of liberal ideas by taking one hurdle at a time.

I am enclosing a copy of a message which I sent to Congress a few days ago and I hope you will like it.

Very sincerely yours,

Franklin D. Roosevelt

It is an ironical comment on the perception of professional politicians, then complacently nailing millions of coffins by allowing irresponsible financiers to consolidate the power of Europe's dictators, that one who took so little interest in politics as Llewelyn thus early discerned the stormclouds of approaching disaster.

When John moved to Dorchester on 8th October, in accordance with his 'mythology' doubtless selecting his sixty-second birthday as an auspicious date for entering the lodgings ascribed to Dud No-man in *Maiden Castle*, he begged Llewelyn to take at least a week's

complete rest from even the slightest exertion. 'I have not been so well,' wrote Llewelyn to Bertie, 'and I am on Monday thinking of going in for a cure of complete rest, like a Trappist monk *not speaking*, no, nor reading, nor writing. . . . The idea is to let the body concentrate without any distractions.' The intention was carried out with his usual thoroughness, as he reported to Theodore Dreiser:

I remained absolutely at rest like a trappist monk, I didn't speak or write or read, but lay freezing like a rabbit and by God I am better, and my fever left me. I think my mind is too active and will not allow my body to heal my lungs.

Even during his concentrated bodily inactivity, his mind had been as busy as ever. Almost his first act after his week's silence was to write the long letter to John in his published *Letters*, relating his reflections on the latter part of the *Autobiography*. As he told Theodore Dreiser, 'I thought the latter end of his autobiography false, but the beginning very beautiful and wonderful.' Five-sixths of the book present a revelation of the first forty years of John's life with a personal veracity and self-analysis remarkable in the literature of autobiography, as many writers of distinction immediately recognized. But in the final sixth it seems that either the writer was unprepared to discuss in the same detail the last twenty years of his life as the first forty, or that, anxious to reach the conclusion of an already long book, he abandoned any attempt at narrative sequence and allowed his fancy to play, often frivolously, in and out the labyrinthine maze of his complex mind. Llewelyn's lucid habit of thought was offended; he felt that John had condescended to a display of intellectual acrobatics as he might in one of his 'teasing' moods.

Confessing that 'I get nervous, I mean easily upset,' he felt, in his close preoccupation with death, a certain frivolity in John's description of his being inspired to prayer by aesthetic moods. 'I think,' he wrote, 'when you comment to the public on your pleasure at invoking a Christian saint to help me in trouble *against my wishes* you suggest that your feeling was not very deep.'

For, John, I have been very ill, and when those you love are ill it is not easy to wish to tease them even in airy thoughts—rather a cry goes up, silent and unconfessed, that would not trespass against *any* of their wishes. . . . You must forgive my criticisms. I felt distressed over the last half of your book and I know how you answer my stammered words by agreeing to what least matters.

Apparently John answered his 'stammered words' as anticipated, and Llewelyn exploded:

I don't at all like your bringing these Christian mediators to my rescue. What is St. Michael to me? I would rather die than to supplicate him. I like your old Gods, your own Gods better. Jesus I know, but these other small fry in the Aquarium of Deception, let them lie with their white bellies upwards and be prayed to by the women you know so well. . . . You are *wrong* John, *wrong* John, *wrong* John. Your judgments are unbalanced in these matters.

As always his spleen was quickly soothed, and he wrote a few days later:

Your letter came this morning. Do you know I have been troubled by my letter ever since it left and every morning I thought, I will not write to-day—better to let the answer come and now it has come and such a civilized answer so that my 'stroke' goes harmless. I thought it gross of me to have ventured a criticism of your methods: but I was piqued by the 'effrontery' of offering so devious an explanation, but on the other hand who am I to criticize the tortuous methods of J. C. P., methods which in the past have often proved useful and for all I know your feeling is sensible and true! I don't know, but I know, my dear brother, you have my love always and it was always my prerogative to follow after you clop, clop, clop, a pair of clogs in pursuit of a wagtail, or Polly-wash-the-dish, as Violet calls them. There have always been occasions when I have been allowed to put my wheel on my brother's spoke.

The other affair you did not understand. It is true, as you say, that I am at the bottom of my mind an old-fashioned materialist, and do feel convinced that the monstrous bluff of German idealism *will be found out* in the LONG RUIN, but a large area of my *surface mind* is very sympathetic and susceptible to the longings of the heart and never in my life have I lost confidence in the mighty powers of John's spirit. It was for this that I begged Alyse to wire you when I was in my agony receiving back as I might from Bloody Johnny the quiet answer 'Thinking of you always both of us.'

No, I am always a believer in your supernatural native powers, and half a believer in your sticks and stones and fields of grace, and even to your prayers to Jesus in the damp straw, but you have no idea how deep my distaste for Christianity and its ecclesiastic rogueries—my whole moral nature revolts from its teaching and practise, and it was when I found you praying to 'Church' Saints instead of to the stone of Fal that I felt in some way betrayed and *weakened* as if the blue banner of the Montacute Temperance Society was suddenly to be hoisted in the middle of the stone circle where you prayed, and I asked to join with Mr. Cozens of Stoke in a little prayer. No I cannot like Christianity. *I hate it*, and would rather die than to appeal to it for help ever. I think it has made the poor race of mortals more *heavy laden* than ever before and continues always to confuse the issue and interfere with natural happiness. It was never the wish of Jesus to have his father made a cuckold before the Gentiles. Mark you well he loved his father more than he loved his mother and has for 19 hundred years been 'pained' by the chit chat of the church. How these Dogs cling to their Dogmas to confound the human race. They are at the bottom of all our ills. They subsist upon disease and weakness in the

human mind. Even yesterday in the *Dorset Echo* I read of a Weymouth clergyman who says that the motive of evolution remains unproved and there is a wide difference between a scientific hypothesis and a scientific FACT. They will neglect no red herring by which they can corrupt and bewilder the human mind for *their own ends*. Being saved by Faith means subjecting yourself to their lies. For myself I prefer to be more *mind* on the 'independent side' as they describe mutinous farm labourers of the mind in Dorset.

His mind was troubled by an unexpected complication. For some years he had felt concern about the conduct of a local home for mentally defective girls. There had been cases of girls escaping restraint to run away; passers-by had heard girls crying. During his absence in America in 1930-31 his friends Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland had interested themselves in the case of a girl who ran away from the home, and had visited the controllers of the home. Listening to their account of their visit, Llewelyn was shocked, as Charles Reade was shocked seventy years before when he wrote *Hard Cash*, that the controllers of such an institution should be able to influence asylum authorities to put any child 'away for ever.' Early in 1934, when his brother Willie informed him of another case of a girl's running away, Llewelyn decided that some action should be taken. Considering that the present controllers were not 'suitable persons' to have the care of mentally deficient children, who should be 'treated with sympathy and understanding and not be subjected to a too rigid discipline,' he drew up a short petition asking 'that the whole case should be thoroughly investigated by the Dorset County Council, and that persons should be empowered by this body to take full evidence in order to ascertain the facts.' He showed the petition to his friend James Cobb, the farmer of West Chaldon, who not only signed the petition but undertook to invite other residents in the village to sign. It was finally signed by forty-two local residents, including Llewelyn and Alyse, Theodore and his wife, Gertrude, Katie, and their brother Willie. It was addressed to the vicar of the parish, who happened also to be landlord of the property rented by the controllers of the home. Under democratic conditions it seemed a natural and constitutional proceeding to appeal for such investigation by a local government body elected as representatives of the ratepayers.

Receiving no response to the petition, Llewelyn wrote to a member of the County Council, enclosing a copy of the petition.

I write to you personally in the hope that you will see your way to bring this matter to the notice of the Dorset County Council at the earliest possible moment.

Should the Council decide to take action in furtherance of the wishes of the petitioners, I am sure they will realize the necessity of electing on the Committee of Inquiry those who are without any personal interest or concern in the matter to be investigated.

The councillor duly laid the matter before his Council which, ignoring Llewelyn's request for an impartial inquiry, referred it to the Committee which had appointed, and was employing, the controllers. Though meanwhile Miss Warner and Miss Ackland had written to both the clerical landlord and the clerk to the Council, saying that, having seen a copy of the petition, they wished to endorse it in every particular, the Committee condescended to no acknowledgment of the petition of forty-two signatures. Instead, Llewelyn received a letter from a firm of London solicitors, accusing him of 'falsely and maliciously publishing' defamatory statements about the controllers.

He then addressed a letter to the Committee, emphasizing that the petitioners had good reason to suppose that the controllers were 'not suitable persons for looking after abnormal girls,' and only desired an opportunity 'of explaining to some local authorities appointed by you the reasons for our conclusions.' If 'after a full inquiry' the Committee was 'satisfied with the circumstances,' the petitioners would 'be only too gratified at having our disquietude relieved' and would 'put the matter finally out of our minds,' but meanwhile they felt that the controllers' 'method of endeavouring to suppress our plea by allowing threatening letters to be sent to us by a London lawyer is unfair and unjustified.' He also emphasized that no personal prejudice was felt against the controllers; actually Llewelyn himself had never seen one of them in his life, and had only twice saluted the other in passing.

At this juncture Frances, Lady Warwick visited Chydyok. Two years before, on its original appearance in *Country Life*, the essay in *Earth Memories* called 'A House of Correction,' describing the sufferings of a sheep-dog, had invoked sundry indignant and solicitous letters, including one from Lady Warwick offering to buy the dog and give it a home. She became an admirer of Llewelyn's writings and hearing of his illness asked if she might call to see him. Child welfare being amongst her philanthropic preoccupations, Llewelyn and Alyse confided this matter to her, and she undertook to consult the director of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. On 4th October, 1934, she wrote to Alyse

that the director had already received particulars of the home and assured her that most likely the case would be withdrawn, but alternatively 'you would win hands down with the backing of the Society and the whole village who signed the petition.' 'I do hope, my dear friends, that this will set your minds at rest and that a grave scandal should be scotched,' she wrote. 'I am sure you have done a very good work.'

But Lady Warwick forgot that the creaking paraphernalia of legal machinery are as 'extensive and peculiar' as Sam Weller's knowledge of London. On the same day as she was writing to Alyse, the director of the N.S.P.C.C. was writing to her that, on representations from the Society, the Ministry of Health had inspected the home and were to continue their surveillance, but as the Society had been called in only after presentation of the petition and reception by the signatories of a solicitor's letter demanding an apology, the matter was *sub judice* and he was therefore 'debarred making any representations direct to plaintiff.'

Llewelyn's object was thus achieved, as conditions at the home were being officially investigated, according to his original request. But the wolves of the law were unleashed, and their ravening must be appeased. An apology was impossible, since it would have implied lack of the right to appeal for investigation. The counsel employed by Llewelyn on behalf of himself and Mr. Cobb was not concerned with whether or not Llewelyn was justified in petitioning for an inquiry. According to him the points at issue were: Are the words complained of defamatory of the plaintiffs? Were they published? Was the occasion of publishing privileged? Was either of these defendants malicious? Apparently 'the occasion of publication' would have been 'privileged' if Llewelyn had taken the precaution to write the words 'Private and Personal' on his letters to the clergyman and the councillor!

Months passed in waiting for the case to be called at Dorchester Assizes. Night after night Llewelyn's health was prejudiced by wakefulness in worrying. As the date approached his condition deteriorated as his anxiety mounted. But he was determined to attend the trial in person, in defiance of all persuasion.

Hearing of his determination Mrs. Hardy offered her car to convey him from Chaldon to Dorchester on 17th January and Llewelyn wrote to Arthur Ficke:

I have set my heart on getting in if I can and am to be carried over the downs

in an armchair placed in a dog cart like some buggerly Buddha for the populace to bawl after and the seagulls to molest—a 'proper guy'—swaying this way and that above the heads of all. On the village green I am to be met by Mrs. Thomas Hardy's car and conveyed to the Antelope where John has bespoken a room—no. 18—and will be waiting for me. The next day, all being well, I shall appear in court. . . . If I see real undiluted blood I shall turn tail wherever I am. For four days I have had discolouration and even a little this morning, but never enough for me to be certain that I could not make the triumphal entry into Dorchester and 'get away with it.'

He survived the ordeal, but the jury found a verdict against the defendants. On 18th January, 1935, Llewelyn Powys, James Cobb, Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland were found guilty of libel and sentenced to fines of one hundred pounds each with costs.

But the figures announced in court inadequately indicated the expense of litigation. By the time the lawyers had completed their correspondence, Llewelyn had paid to his solicitors six cheques amounting altogether to the sum of £573 8s. 3d. These charges were exclusive, not only of Miss Warner's and Miss Ackland's expenses, but of Mr. Cobb's share of the costs and fine amounting to £177 5s. 4d. After the trial Llewelyn wrote to Mr. Cobb:

My brother has just brought in the verdict. So the Dorset people thought we had 'crooked thoughts' in our heads. . . . It was very good of you to be such a sturdy support from the beginning to the end, and as I feel myself responsible for getting you into the scrape I do not intend that you shall lose money so I have written to the lawyers to say I will pay your share of the costs and your fine.

But Mr. Cobb preserved his sturdy independence to the end and declined to take advantage of Llewelyn's offer. Llewelyn exclaimed in thanking him, 'God! You are of the true old stock, such as are not often to be found now-a-days and if there were more Christians like you I would soon feel like respecting them.' Later he dedicated *The Twelve Months* to 'my friend and neighbour James Cobb.'

'I was *staggered* when I heard the Judge's verdict, though the summing-up might have warned me,' wrote Mrs. Hardy on 22nd January. 'I cannot tell you how great is my indignation.' Rivers Pollock, himself a magistrate, said, 'I have puzzled my head a good deal as to how the jury could have come to the conclusion they did and am not yet fully decided, though I have formulated certain views.' Llewelyn confided his belief to Arthur Ficke that certain elements

had been influenced by 'prejudice against *The Pathetic Fallacy* and *Apples Be Ripe*.'

The case attracted much attention. Newspaper headlines announced 'Verdict of Malice against Dying Author,' and on Sunday, 20th January, double-crown display posters all over England bore the legend, NEWS OF THE WORLD—DYING MAN IN DORSET ASSIZE DRAMA.' Another Sunday newspaper, with a circulation of a mere million or so, invited Llewelyn to write an article on the *Meditations of a Dying Man*. The result, afterwards published in the *Literary Guide* of June 1935, was a shrewd, succinct, and beautiful synopsis of his poetic faith. Contrasting the mercy of sudden death with the horrors of prolonged agony, he discusses the 'infantile, self-indulgent wish-thinking' of such 'pathetic fallacies' as Pauline Christianity and the Egyptian belief in the resurrection of Osiris, before, quoting Epicurus and Montaigne, he discusses from his own experience the means of facing death with fortitude.

I have always believed that man's real capital lies not in money or social eminence, but in the power his body possesses for responding to every experience of life. One hair of my beard is more dear to me than all the money that can be exacted from me. However, on the two occasions when my disorder has brought death alarmingly near I learned that the senses in such hours of extremity are not to be trusted. They will all of them become panic-stricken, as though they were a bevy of over-sensitive girls required against their wills to be present at a tragedy. In such a crisis it is the haughty mind that we must call up to steady these five cowardly slaves who stand huddled together, inactive and forlorn. It is time then to consider the real facts of our case. We are shadows, one of a myriad ephemeral beings that have come mysteriously to knowledge on a rainbow planet that is tumbling through a physical universe of inconceivable dimensions. It is by the rarest chance that we have ever lived; and does it then become us to grudge when the hour arrives for us to walk the way of all nature? Surely to look at the sunlight for the last time should rather be an occasion for the trembling of our marrow bones with gratitude. We should bring back to memory the story of our life's experience, its sorrows, its loves, and

* The gravity of implications from the verdict seems to have occurred neither to lawyers nor the press. The essential point was not whether conditions at the home in question were beyond reproach or otherwise, but the right of ratepayers to demand of their elected representatives investigation of local conditions open to suspicion. At the time of writing, a man has been recently sentenced to six years' penal servitude for causing by cruel treatment the death of a child entrusted to his care as a foster-parent by a local authority. Evidence at the trial disclosed the knowledge of many neighbours that the man was an unfit person to have charge of children. The child's life could have been saved by removal to another home, but nobody was inclined to risk prosecution by laying information against the householder or by demanding official investigation.

all the living poetry of our fugitive days. Never for a moment should we allow regrets or remorse to poison our minds. In the grave all will be at quits. It was in our nature to have acted as we have acted. We rely implicitly on the teaching of Epicurus, though it is wise to modify its classical austerity with the fresh dew of natural goodness, of natural heathen compassion. We may disregard the greater part of conventional morality. It has been my experience that gross wickedness has usually been supported by the cowardly acquiescences of a correct society that cares only for the surface appearance of things, and little for the frightened truth that lies hidden behind. As Professor Whitehead has so admirably said: 'In all stages of civilization the popular Gods represent the more primitive brutalities of the tribal life. . . .'

The real sins of life are two only—stupidity and cruelty; and against these, without hope of reward, war should be for ever waged by every magnanimous and well-descended spirit. It has long been my steadfast belief that human misery of every kind can in a large measure be lifted through intelligence and generosity. I would like to believe on my death-bed that I had worthily followed the dwarf's teaching when he said in Grimm's Fairy Tales: 'Something human is dearer to me than all the wealth of the world.'

The astonishment on reception of such an article in an office dedicated to the purveyance of 'popular' journalism may be imagined! In recent years the British Broadcasting Corporation has discovered ample evidence that vast numbers of the untutored masses appreciate great music, good literature, and honest thought, if they know where to find it. But editorial staffs of many 'popular' newspapers, conscious of their own peculiar talents, jealously foster the illusion that the average reader desires only lukewarm pornography, the garbage of police-courts, stale scandal about social parasites, and sadistic gloating over moral misfortune. A pitying editor deputed his subordinate to explain this convention to Llewelyn.

Many thanks for your article. . . . I am afraid, however, that it is not quite what the Editor meant. You have rather flown over the heads of the average reader with your excursions into philosophy etc. I think the article could have been so human and 'down to earth' if you had stated in absolutely simple language just how you are preparing to meet the end, what you are thinking about, the things you regret having done, the things you are proud of doing, the questions you ask yourself, 'What my life would have been like if I had done so and so or not done so and so,' what you imagine your life after death to be—or do you not believe in that?—the things you care to remember and the things you are trying to forget. Are you frightened to die? If you care to try and recast it again on the lines I suggest. . . . I will get the Editor to interest himself in it again.

Llewelyn refrained from imposing further strain on the Editor's reserves of mental energy. But he preserved the letter. Probably it

reminded him of the manuals he used to read on 'writing for the papers.'

After the trial the solicitors invited counsel's opinion on the possibility of an appeal. Counsel was 'of the opinion that there was no evidence of malice to go to the Jury,' but that the judge 'thought otherwise as he left the case for them to decide.' The solicitors deducted from this that 'we do not think you will wish to Appeal in this case' and devoted their attention to adding up charges. To assure himself that the official investigation of the home was continued, Llewelyn wrote to high authorities, taking the precaution to mark his communications 'Personal, Private and Confidential.' From all sorts of sources he received letters of sympathy, and such good friends as Rivers Pollock relieved him of anxiety over finding the money to meet the lawyers' bills.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Struggle for Life—II

WITH the cloud of worry lifted from his mind, the affair seems to have served as a tonic to his fighting spirit. In February, within a month after the trial, he was able to walk regularly to the house and sit before the fire. In March he was so much stronger that he went to stay at Weymouth for dental treatment. 'It makes me very happy to be able to walk on the esplanade,' he told Arthur Ficke on 26th March:

I shake hands with everybody I see, whether worker or shopkeeper, as a man might do *who has risen from the grave*. Ho! Ho! my life returns. The spring is coming and I am happy to be alive.

Lying in a bow window of his lodging in Brunswick Terrace, whence he could see far up and down the coast, he became convinced, as he tells in *Somerset Essays*, that he could see with his field-glass the top-most crest of High Chaldon. 'Gertrude would not believe me,' he wrote to his brother Willie, 'and yesterday I asked Valentine Ackland to light a flare at 8.30 p.m. It was a dark rainy night, but at the exact time I saw the light and had time to call Alyse.'

Besides such simple pleasures and the enjoyment of walks in the crisp morning air 'as far as Invicta House where old Bowles used to live,' he took an active interest in a movement to preserve Lodmoor, with its ancient public rights of way, as a bird sanctuary, and so to prevent the establishment of a sewage farm by the town council. Already, as appears in his published *Letters*, he had invited the co-operation of Mr. G. Bryer Ash to urge the purchase of Lodmoor by the Weymouth Corporation to preserve 'this beautiful piece of wild natural country,' so that 'the poetic quality of Weymouth would be protected forever.' As secretary of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, his brother Bertie was able to advise him on a course of procedure, and besides writing letters to the local press and to the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society, in conjunction with Mr. Bryer Ash and Mr. Julius Caesar, a town councillor, he took endless trouble in writing personal letters to stimulate interest in Weymouth residents.

Always he evinced keen interest in matters relating to the beauties

and historical landmarks of Dorset, and his fortnightly articles in the *Dorset Echo* brought him much correspondence and many cordial friendships. However ill he was, he never failed to answer personally letters from strangers. Young writers sometimes sent manuscripts, even of novels; he read them and wrote helpful letters of criticism and advice. To a young clerk who wrote despondently of the difficulty of living according to the philosophy of *Impassioned Clay* and *Glory of Life* while bound to daily attendance at an office, he wrote a letter of some seven hundred words, full of practical advice and concluding with these rules of summarized counsel.

1. Succeed in your worldly career (however modest your position) as it were contemptuously with your left hand.
2. Redeem your environment by becoming more and more independent through cultivation of your mind and the discipline of your character.
3. Develop your sensibilities fearlessly in every direction.
4. Become spiritually and materially self-sufficient and always be on the side of the more generous and sensitive values of life.
5. However strong your castle may become always keep its postern doors open for pity to enter in when it is her wish.

Later in the year he began a correspondence continuing to the end of his life with a young poet. Then a clerk in a shop at Bournemouth, Kenneth Hopkins wrote asking if he might call. As Llewelyn was too ill to write, Alyse replied that he might see Llewelyn for ten minutes only. For those ten minutes he cycled sixty miles from Bournemouth and back. Llewelyn afterwards wrote to him:

You have much to learn. I have seldom received a more foolishly facetious letter than your first to me. You must understand that even amongst free spirits and poets manners are to be valued highly and the test of good manners is to be more concerned about another person's attitude than your own. When I saw you I was won by a certain personal charm that you have and this prompted me to write you so careful a letter, but now comes this letter which is discouraging because it takes too much for granted. You must prove yourself sensitive and understanding before you expect to be taken in by anyone. It was indiscreet of you to call on my brother without having given him any warning. You have certainly no reason to say that you will continue to call me Mr. Powys, as though by way of a concession, and you should not expect to take as your right advantages which come to people who are full of reserves and diffidence and sensitive understanding. I advise you to look about amongst your friends and model your behaviour after the demeanour of the one that is most sensitive. I would look in all directions, for gentlemen have no monopoly of good conduct and often the messenger boy is more sensitive to another's personality than a prince. You must avoid being cheap and self-assertive. You have undoubted gifts, but do not talk nonsense about 'inspiration.' You must learn to go over and over your poetry. You must improve your mind in every way, *not for*

show. You should approach English Literature like a scholar with real application. Say always less than you know and be more eager to listen than to speak. At present you are not above magazine level, but you could, I believe, develop. It depends on your spiritual intensity which should be inexhaustible.

The 'careful' letter to which Llewelyn referred, dated 6th November 1935, contained detailed counsel.

1. To be a poet you must live with an intensity five times, nay a hundred times more furious than that of those about you. There is no scene, no experience which should not contribute to your poetic appreciations and culture.

2. You must regulate your life as strict as a religious devotee. You must keep a strict eye on your health. . . . Never try to assert yourself with your associates. Do not try to compete with them. Their way is not *your* way. Never use *their* weapons, be good-natured and withdraw into yourself. Always be simple and sensitive and direct, never facetious, especially about poetry. Let them know nothing about it. Read, Read, Read, but never read trivial books. Follow every person from whom you can learn anything. Keep a secret journal for the record of all the experiences of the day that seem to have value. Always look up in a dictionary the meaning of every word that you do not know and keep another little book for writing these words down. Rid your mind as far as you can of class-consciousness, value intellect and sensibility and character—discount wealth as you discount poverty—avoid worldly ambition, let your ambitions be elsewhere. Learn to discriminate and to recognize what is vulgar and pretentious and trivial, be always simple and sincere and cast away all affectations. Be sensitively aware of everybody you have to do with. As you grow more thoughtful and more poetic your personality will grow more arresting and you will find all the more attractive and exciting people will be drawn to you. Never pretend or show off and never waste a moment of your day. With regard to your sexual life—be able to be controlled and be able to be abandoned. Those who get most out of Love lie together on the enchanted web of Romance. Read the *Oxford Book of English Verse* over and over again. Study every line of John Keats and Matthew Arnold. Read a good translation of Lucretius, of Montaigne's essays, of Rabelais, read Andrew Lang's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Read all of Shakespeare's plays slowly, one a week. . . . Do your daily tasks carefully and conscientiously. It is important to be able to be economically independent. Do not be in any hurry to marry. Spend long hours in the libraries, join any literary societies, attend lectures, visit galleries, never miss any opportunity of learning about anything. Cultivate your love for the open country, explore it, learn the names of every flower and bud. Linnets do not nest in woods. Your love of lonely places is a good sign. You can, if you wish, make your life a very thrilling one. You have many advantages but you must look to yourself, examine your own soul, and have little thought of cutting a figure. If you have an authentic passion for Life all else will be added.

While he was at Weymouth, *Damnably Opinions* was published by Watts. Though prejudice obviously tainted many reviews, there were notices generously recognizing Llewelyn's status both as philosopher and writer of prose. 'I was glad to see that good review of *Damnably*

Opinions in The Times Literary Supplement, he wrote to Gertrude: 'the man was evidently very sympathetic.' In the *Literary Guide* for May, John Rowland used the book as an occasion for a critical survey of Llewelyn's work, 'A Great Humanist—An Appreciation of Llewelyn Powys,' ending:

Llewelyn Powys is a supreme artist, and his work will endure for many generations. To Rationalists especially he is a proud possession.

The latter part of the statement was speedily proved. Besides establishing a friendly correspondence with John Rowland, the article resulted in Llewelyn's becoming a frequent contributor to the *Literary Guide* and *The Freethinker*, and every year he wrote an article for the *Rationalist Annual*. Another regular medium of publication was the *New English Weekly*, the successor to A. R. Orage's old paper, *The New Age*.

Trying to build up his strength at Weymouth, he began to eat fats, but immediately his kidney disease reasserted itself. Always he was held in the cleft stick of conflicting complaints. Returning to the diet appeasing stomach and kidney, he was unable to gain weight and strength to heal his lungs. Back at Chydyok in May, he caught cold and was afflicted by more blood-spitting. He was still in bed in July when Louis Wilkinson came for a long stay in the village to write his book on the Powys family. 'Louis is at the dairy farm again and in good spirits,' he wrote to Willie. Probably Louis's conversation proved even more provocative than usual of dangerous laughter, as he brought parts of his manuscript to read to Llewelyn.

The title of *Welsh Ambassadors*, chosen gleefully by Llewelyn because, as he remarked in *The Twelve Months*, it is a term of poetic dialect for the cuckoo, was deprecated by Bertie, who objected that the family had been too long exiled from the land of its origin to be called Welsh. When the book appeared, those who recoiled from the frankness of its revelations especially deplored a letter of Llewelyn's to Louis from Africa discussing his philanderings with a native girl. Llewelyn foresaw the scandalized revulsion, but characteristically he regretted only a carelessness of phrasing and the fact that caution had deterred him from full enjoyment of the girl. After Louis had left the village in the autumn he wrote:

I long to see you again. Not to be able to talk freely with you is exasperating to me. Your company gives as much cheer to my spirit today as it did when I first met you thirty years ago. . . . I am conscious of certain inhibitions about the letter of the black woman. I would very much prefer it to be said 'I led her to my bed,'

or even 'I pulled her to my bed,' as the word *drag*, especially after the use of the word *slave*, gives the suggestion of the white settler's attitude to these girls which I *never* shared. I remember being resentful of — when he said, 'After I have had them I kick them out of bed.' *It was not my way*, and although in a letter I might have pretended such practices, in actual fact I know I would have 'led her' from the door, silently trembling, fearfully almost—afraid of Sherborne schoolmasters; and I think the publication of this brag, though it supports your thesis, is fundamentally misleading with regard to my sexual psychology. . . . In considering the letter in retrospect I find it is my propagandist instinct that is most perturbed. . . . I do not like my enemies, the moralists, seeing my delights spoilt by fear of the pox. I would much prefer to drive them mad by describing an abandonment to lechery that had no let or hindrance—was 'degraded' as they would think, and yet full of grace and likely to encourage rather than discourage lust.

Finished in September, *Welsh Ambassadors* was published by Chapman and Hall in the New Year of 1936, some three months after the Bodley Head issued Richard Heron Ward's critical study of *The Powys Brothers*, which, while appreciating John's work with enthusiasm and shrewd insight, treated Theodore's and Llewelyn's, by striving too eagerly after simplification, with less sympathy and discrimination.

Bedridden throughout the summer, Llewelyn was always working except during periods of actual blood-spitting. He retained all his old recklessness as soon as he felt removed from the chill shadow of imminent danger. His sister Marian spent the summer with her sisters, and took her share of reading aloud at his bedside, but sometimes he would say, 'Pretend you are reading to me, but really we will talk.' In the autumn his temperature refused to abate, and John, who had finally settled in North Wales after the winter at Dorchester, wrote begging him to undertake another week of silence as in the previous year. Llewelyn obeyed, but resumed work as soon as the week had passed, gathering information for his essay on the Montacute poet, Thomas Shoel, till his rising temperature enforced further rest. He wrote to John at the beginning of October:

I have resolved to stay where I am without talking or writing until my temperature comes right down. I did not like having night sweats again after 25 years. It is like waking in a damp shroud!

On 15th October Alyse reported to Arthur Ficke:

How I have welcomed those letters of warning you have sent Lulu. . . . Never since Lulu began to get his strength back a little has he *really* followed your full advice, for he has never given up his writing, often starting at seven in the morning, writing at a furious rate until half-past one—articles, letters, a thousand projects in his head. Our devastating law case caused him endless agitation, and it is often

difficult to decide whether it is better to risk giving him a haemorrhage by going against his will or let him go on. He tried a week of silence under John's persuasion some time ago and his temperature responded at once, but he began once more the same activities. . . . Finally I found that his temperature was 100 in the morning and this alarmed him as well as me. He gave up all work, all visits, but it went above 102 and he had night sweats. . . . That was about ten days ago. With absolute rest, no writing, no visitors, it has got down to below 99 again and his pulse is normal. And now at last he is persuaded to give up his writing and all other work until his temperature is really down and stays down. . . . He has never been really out of bed, though he has walked out of doors on garden paths, and is now in the house. I know this very damp climate is bad for him too, for he has always responded quickly to climates and weathers, and we have hardly had a day without rain for six weeks or more. He thinks now that we should go to Switzerland when he is strong enough—he certainly is not strong enough now. . . . His eyes still trouble him which makes doubly hard his inaction, for he can use them to write, but very little to read.

A few days later, on 21st October, Llewelyn wrote to Willie, 'If I could read I could get on merry like, but I tried to read Montaigne and have made them bad again, though only a few chapters, and not to be able to write makes me curse also.'

With south-westerly gales, rain and fog, the winter was exceptionally wet, and Llewelyn made painfully slow progress, with frequent relapses. On 6th December he wrote to a young admirer, Brynmor Davies:

I am still in bed, but I do not despair of getting about again. In any case I have had a very happy life and have survived for over half a century and have wasted no hour, no, no minute of my conscious life.

His relentless determination to work whenever possible conformed with his philosophy, for he enjoyed writing, as he wrote always according to his inclination, and wished not to waste the gift he had acquired after long years of self-mistrust. Robert Gibbings was completing his illustrations for *The Twelve Months*, poetical essays on the months of the year contributed to the *Daily Herald* and soon to be published in a handsome volume by the Bodley Head, and by Christmas Llewelyn had completed the five essays intended for *The Poetry of God*. 'As a collaborator he was excellent,' writes Robert Gibbings, 'pouring in a profusion of ideas and generally most appreciative of the results, even though they were far from what he had anticipated.' With the courtesy of one artist to another, he offered ideas without presuming to dictate and criticized results constructively. 'I will do as you say about the *Months* and you shall have the "ideas" within a few days,' he wrote in one of his frequent letters to his illustrator,

'but you must not take them seriously or by the letter but use them merely as mounting stones for the great restive stallion of *your own imagination*.' One of his rejected ideas was 'to end the month of December with one magnificent Breughel-like El Greco-like Bewick-like wood engraving of the Nativity. . . . Let the stable be an Irish stable as you remember, and let your beautiful Elizabeth be the Madonna and you yourself a lusty golden-bearded Joseph, and let the six Powys brothers be the worshipping shepherds bringing their gifts.' He especially liked the tail-piece to July: 'I think the hedgehog is perfect, wonderfully executed, wonderfully conceived, a supreme work of art.'

Published in the late autumn of 1935 by the Bodley Head and illustrated by Wyndham Goodden's photographs, *Dorset Essays* received generously eulogistic reviews. As Rivers Pollock wrote of the libel trial, 'the repercussions will be all in your favour,' and following John's *Autobiography*, Heron Ward's critical study and *Welsh Ambassadors* impressed both Bloomsbury and Fleet Street that it was time to treat the Powys brothers with cautious respect. The list of seventeen books, grouped in seven different categories, appearing opposite the title page of *Dorset Essays*, merited the decorum due to an 'elder' writer. 'He sees things with the perception of a poet and with the selective eye of an artist,' wrote *The Times Literary Supplement*. 'His descriptions are given in a prose which has the power to recall the seventeenth century in the wealth of its imagery and learning and in the fine simplicity of its measure.'

Alone among the Powys brothers in mingling much with literary and artistic society in London, Bertie wrote of the praise he everywhere heard of Llewelyn's prose, and Llewelyn's ever youthful heart built hopes that the enthusiasm of reviews might be reflected in the sales. But just after Christmas he wrote ruefully:

Alas, how you deceived me over *Dorset Essays*. I heard yesterday that they are in no sight of reprinting which means not 1000 sold, so I shall get small reward over the amount I have spent in giving away copies. I am not a popular writer.

Nevertheless he received repeated assurance that his work was duly valued by increasing numbers of discerning enthusiasts. Letters came from all sorts of admirers, and his cottage on the downs became a place of pilgrimage, not only for ardent young beginners, but for writers of such established distinction as H. J. Massingham and James Hanley, of whom Llewelyn wrote, recording his visit to Professor

Iyengar, 'He is of the people and out-Herod's Herod in realism but he has a vein of authentic genius.'

The cold of January 1936 brought Llewelyn a bout of pleurisy, punctuated alarmingly by frequent blood-spitting. His recovery was tediously slow, but he obstinately persisted with his work. Among visitors to his bedside in February were the Rev. Harold Trask, a friend of his Montacute youth, and the son of the Rev. Henry Hardin, who had been Baptist minister at Montacute during his boyhood. Both talked with him of Montacute memories, of Thomas Shoel, Nancy Cooper, and other subjects included in *Somerset Essays*. Already he was hard at work on the companion volume to *Dorset Essays*. 'I have written a rare essay on Witcombe Bottoms, made up out of your letter,' he wrote to Willie, 'and it will do well for my *Somerset Essays* and will first be printed in the *Countryman*.' The last of his essays in *The Twelve Months* appeared in the *Daily Herald* during January, but he continued to write frequent seasonal essays for that paper, which paid him the highest rates he received from English periodicals. Articles intended for a book of nature essays included 'Easter' (*Daily Herald*, 11th April 1936), 'Youth's Merry Day' (1st May), 'Whitsuntide' (1st June), 'St. Swithin's Day' (14th July), and 'August Bank Holiday' (3rd August). *The Twelve Months* might have been followed by a companion volume on *Holidays and Feasts*.

In March the death of his brother Bertie was a crushing blow. It was unexpected, for of all the brothers Bertie had enjoyed the most robust health. Little more than a year before, on 18th February, 1935, he had written to Alyse after a brief visit to Chydyok, 'I feel so brutally well in your company & in his that I am almost ashamed of my good fortune.' After John had determined to settle in North Wales, Llewelyn had tried to persuade Bertie to take a house at Chaldon, but objecting that Dorset was too far from his work in London, Bertie wrote, 'No it won't do: my only chance of coming near you is if I make some money, enough to retire on & of that I see no chance.' He did not relax from his diligent attendance to work even when, at Christmas 1935, his doctor warned him of the need for complete rest, and in February Llewelyn wrote to Willie:

To-day we hear that poor Bert has had a haemorrhage of the stomach and been sick. This is a great worry. I hope to God he will get on. He always disregards his health until he gets into these devilish troubles. We were worried in the autumn, but he only said, 'I have a pain in the guts,' that is all.

It was the same gastric disorder that had dogged John all his life,

afflicted Littleton and Llewelyn, and was to bring Willie dangerously close to death some three years later.

Throughout Llewelyn's illness Bertie had been tender in devotion, unremitting in unobtrusive attention, always ready with help and advice for Alyse. Whenever his work on surveying old buildings brought him to the vicinity of Dorset, he snatched the opportunity to stay, if only for a night, with the playmate of his boyhood. Latterly, as if sub-consciously aware of impending fate, his letters had tended more and more to reminiscence of far-off carefree happiness. He was touched when, at this last Christmas, Llewelyn sent their old draught-board as a present for his small son. 'I remember playing on it with you before prayers in the dining room between the sofa end & the leather armchair,' he wrote. 'Sad too a little that you should part with it.' More than three years before, on 11th November, 1932, he had written to Llewelyn:

Your presence on the earth does I believe give it that reality & kindness which makes life for me the thing I blindly serve. It is one of those odd contradictions that Jack loves. For I believe without your existence I should take less interest in the things I do, & that then I should have more time to share in close contact the things of earth with you.

The shock kept Llewelyn sleepless with distress through several nights. Afterwards he never spoke of Bertie without emotion. 'The actual shock affected me in a way that I had not anticipated,' he wrote. 'All that had happened to us during the last thirty years seemed to fall into a fading distance, while with the abruptness of a lantern slide every incident of my boyhood we had spent together stood out bold and clear.' As recollections flooded his memory, he wrote the moving tribute to 'Albert Reginald Powys' for his *Somerset Essays*, of which he told John on 7th April:

How strange it is to think of poor Bertie, lying there utterly dumb and blind and deaf, without so much as dandelion leaves to eat or sorrel, that he loved to pluck. I think of him much and have dreamed of him, and it seems remarkable and not very right that I should be alive on my mattress and he there . . . I have written for my *Somerset Essays* childhood memories of Bertie.

With warmer weather his pleurisy abated and on 20th April he wrote to Clifford Musgrave, 'I arise shaky and with spindle shanks for a new life.' In May he began to dress in outdoor clothes. Pitifully weak and fragile, he was unable to gain weight and continually worried by a fluctuating temperature. In Southern Dorset his long illness, his essays in the *Dorset Echo*, and his interest in home affairs had made

him an almost legendary figure, a revered possession of the locality in which he lived, rather as Wordsworth and Hartley Coleridge had been in a corner of Westmorland. During the spring the Winfrith band came one night to play to him as he lay in his shelter, especially pleasing him by playing some of the music of Thomas Shoel. Like all his brothers, he had little knowledge of music. In America in 1909 he had sulked when John and Louis laughed at him for not knowing who Patti was, and an amusing instance of his musical ignorance occurred when he left America for England in 1925. He had some twenty cases and articles of luggage, and having foreseen difficulty in seeing all safely aboard, he was relieved at the diligent efficiency of a ship's officer in saving him the trouble. Expressing thanks, he asked the officer's name, explaining that in gratitude he would like to send him one of his books. Staring, the officer said that he had thought Llewelyn was Chaliapin! Llewelyn revealed his identity and they parted with great cordiality, whereupon Llewelyn turned to Alyse and asked, 'Who is Chaliapin?' At this stage of his illness Alyse received a present of a gramophone, with records of Beethoven and Bach, and as he told John, Llewelyn came 'to like to hear this strange music as I lie half in a drowse below stairs.'

Of his work he wrote to John on 7th April, 1936:

I am getting my *Rats in the Sacristy* together and it should be ready in a month. Nobody will take my *Dorset Essays* in America and in England they still have not sold a 1000 copies. *Damnable Opinions* sold 2000 and have earned me £36 in all. I would like to make a little from my books. Journalism is a treadmill. Last year I made £200 by it but it is always an effort and makes you feel as if the paraffin oil had a hole in its bottom. You have to keep pouring in at the top. I am going to write my *Somerset Essays* though even they do not sell. My *Twelve Months* with woodcuts by Robert Gibbings can't find a publisher. This is a letter of complaint but a labourer is *worthy of his hire*.

The Twelve Months was held up only by Robert Gibbings's leaving the Golden Cockerel Press and was published later in the year by the Bodley Head. *Rats in the Sacristy*, the collection of fourteen biographical essays on such adversaries of conventional thought as Aristippus, Lucretius, Julian the Apostate, Rabelais, Burton, and Hobbes, was originally to include thirteen essays and be called *A Baker's Dozen*, the title given to a posthumous volume of reminiscent essays. The more aptly descriptive title of *Rats in the Sacristy* was suggested by John, who wrote a preface for the book, which, eventually published by Watts, was illustrated with woodcuts by Gertrude and dedicated

to George Santayana. During the previous autumn, as he informed Professor Iyengar, he had 'been enjoying the philosophic writings of George Santayana,' and he wrote to the author of *The Life of Reason* and *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, whom he had never met, to ask permission to dedicate this book to him.

Like *Earth Memories*, *Damnable Opinions*, and *Dorset Essays*, *Rats in the Sacristy* failed to find a publisher in America. Van Wyck Brooks, who had written his appreciation of *Dorset Essays*, was active on Llewelyn's behalf, and a new American admirer in Benjamin de Casseres now became a regular correspondent, sending Llewelyn many of his trenchant pamphlets. But, as Llewelyn wrote to Arthur Ficke, 'I still can't get any long book published in America. . . . They say my writing is very good but I lose them money and they will not hazard a groat.'

Diligently he went on working at his essays throughout the summer. John came to stay with him in July, and Littleton was with him on his fifty-second birthday. With Bertie gone, Llewelyn now clung the more closely to Littleton, the idol of his boyhood, with whom he could revive such memories as both had formerly shared with Bertie. At this time writing his reminiscences, *The Joy of It*, Littleton brought his manuscript to read to Llewelyn, and the book was the subject of much correspondence between them.

On 20th July Llewelyn wrote to Benjamin de Casseres, 'Last week when eating the tail of a mackerel, very delicious and fresh from God's streams, I began again spitting blood and thought I was going to be in bed again but it passed and I am now mending again.' After Louis Wilkinson, the last of his summer visitors, had gone, Llewelyn wrote to Arthur Ficke on 12th September:

I have been holding my own during the summer. My temperature has not been absolutely normal but seldom goes above 99. We are planning to go to Switzerland in November for two months. It is a hazard but I think it might help me. . . . I wish you could come to Switzerland, to Clavadel above Davos-Platz, in November but I suppose you would be scared of falling into the hands of some of the Jolly Rogers who now rule . . . in Europe. May the Pox take both parties!

Alyse had written to Dr. Frey, the specialist at Clavadel, and to Lisaly Gujer, the friend who had tended Llewelyn on his collapse after crossing the Furka Pass nearly twenty-five years before.

All arrangements were made for the Swiss visit when Llewelyn had another haemorrhage. He had been working as hard as ever. His plan of 'a Devil's Handbook' to be called *The Craft of Happiness* was

laid aside, but he had completed an essay on Herrick and that on 'Fair Rosamund' included in *Somerset Essays*.

Now he abandoned work to concentrate all resources on summoning strength sufficient to travel, for he saw small chance of his surviving another wet English winter such as the last. Thinner than ever, he dreaded a second haemorrhage and lay 'freezing' by the hour, though he faced the worst possibility serenely, saying that he had enjoyed a happy life. His resolution brought its usual reward. 'If I do not have a haemorrhage before, we are arranging to leave England for Switzerland on Dec. 1st,' he wrote to Arthur Ficke on 15th November. 'Our address will be c/o Fraulein Lisaly Gujer, Clavadel, Davos-Platz, but perhaps better write here till you know for sure I have not died on the way spitting up my life's blood like a frog with a globular throat crushed by God's great heel.' He declined Rivers Pollock's generous offer to accompany them to Calais, feeling it unjustifiable to cause his friend so much trouble, as 'at present I am better and stronger than ever I anticipated and although I still take every precaution I do not think now that the journey will be difficult for me.'

On the appointed day he was driven in a car lent by a friend, Mrs. Eric Rose, to Bournemouth, where he and Alyse and Gertrude took a train to London, there to change for the boat-train. On 2nd December, 1936, he left England for the last time.

Clavadel Again

LLEWELYN went first to Lausanne to consult his old adviser, Dr. Frey, who had moved there from Clavadel. 'We got here in good order and in good spirits,' he wrote to Littleton.

We had a good crossing. . . . From Calais to Lausanne was difficult as we found our 2nd class accommodation too close and too hot. . . . Sometimes we had the window open when a sharp draught made me feel my pleurisy, sometimes we shut the window when presently we became suffocated. This Pension is a little above our natural level and I expect we shall move on in two or three days if Dr. Frey says all is well.

Dr. Frey ordered him to travel to Clavadel with an invalid's chair to save his walking even across a station platform, and he wrote to John from 'my old haunts' on 12th December:

The chair was a most wonderful help. . . . Alyse would get a porter to have it ready and I would be wheeled to the next train or, as in the case of Zurich, to a kind of American waiting room where I sat opposite three diligent knitting young women like the three Fates. When the train began going up I felt very queer once—my ears began to blow in and out at the ear drums, and my chest in difficulties, and then I saw the Evening Star Venus shining over the tree tops and my interest became intense, and as soon as I was out on the platform in the cold air felt better except for a headache almost as sharp as the one when we went to Venice. . . . I am staying in bed till Dr. Frey arrives on Dec. 16th. He is a wonderfully sympathetic man, I may get well. I am reviving. Dr. Frey thought my power of recuperation marvellous. He at first said 'A great deal has been going on here,' but then was in wonder at my *Resistance*.

Dr. Frey's report was encouraging, but declaring that 'the cure of the mountain air depends on how things go in the first month,' he counselled caution and kept Llewelyn in bed.

During his enforced inactivity Llewelyn was much concerned with the news then shocking the world—of King Edward VIII's abdication. Naturally he was among the sympathetic minority which saw in the shabby dismissal of one of the most popular princes in history a stealthy blow for the policy of fostering mediocrity and humbug, and a sad reflection on the treachery of popular emotions. 'I am very sorry that Edward was dismissed,' he wrote to Rivers Pollock.

Some way should have been found for so enlightened and unconventional a King to be kept on the throne. The Archbishop's speech seemed to me the most utter TRIPE to use our old vulgar phrase. The cant, sentiment, and insincerity of an old courtier to whom the giving up of Principalities and Powers for so paltry a thing as Love or Lust would be impossible and would appear in the light of a great Tragedy!!!

To Llewelyn the instance of the King's dismissal seemed a denial, by those fanatical oppressors of natural instincts whose likeness he had recognized in the lineaments of Elijah at Mount Carmel, of the right of the individual to a free life. 'He was a poor man's King and possessed a kind and compassionate heart and should have been forgiven for wanting to have a wench in his bed.'

With his love of recalling old associations, he enjoyed the renewal of acquaintance with scenes and people well known to him twenty-five years before. 'It was at Clavadel that I saw my first grey hair,' he wrote to Arthur Ficke, 'and now my rogue's noddle is as white as a snow-covered fence post.' And to his sister Lucy: 'I feel like an old ghost who had died six times and now returns with a round beard to look down upon old scenes.' He was especially delighted to be, instead of at the Sanatorium, under the roof of his old friend Lisaly Gujer, whom he had first met twenty-six years before in Wilbraham's company. 'Lisaly is wonderful to us,' he wrote: 'She looks after us well all day and prepares a new feast—and laughs, how she can laugh!'

To Arthur Ficke he wrote, 'I have never in my whole existence been so bugged up by publishers.' With the bankruptcy of an honoured London publishing house he lost his royalties from *Dorset Essays* and earlier books. In New York his manuscripts lay for a year with a literary agent till Theodore Dreiser informed him that the agent had absconded. He then sent copies of his books and the manuscript of *Rats in the Sacristy* to another American agent, who, after promising 'great things,' left letters unanswered for eight months. But such ill fortune lacked power to damp his spirits after Dr. Frey's encouraging report. As he told his sister Lucy, though 'my publishing affairs have fallen upon days so disastrous . . . yet my heart is light because I have got here safe and hope to be soon getting better.'

He was happy too that, relieved of the housekeeping burden which with her bedside attendance had monopolized her time for the past three years, Alyse now had 'freedom to write, and peace.'

While she began her book of philosophical essays, *Wheels on Gravel*, Llewelyn at her suggestion resumed work on the 'imaginary autobiography' laid aside after the first months following his haemorrhage of 1933. On 10th January, 1937, Dr. Frey came over to examine him again and declared that he would 'make old bones.' Llewelyn had enjoyed reviving acquaintance with his old doctor, whose 'hair that was black is white,' and the news of his sudden death immediately after his visit was a shock. 'My old doctor who was so poetical, philosophical, and understanding has died,' he wrote on 15th January to Clifford Musgrave.

He sounded me last Sunday and now is to be buried today—He told Alyse he felt evil premonitions and that he feared to die, 'for life was so sweet.' He had a great mania for my books and this pleased me much. . . . I have now *outlived* the three doctors who looked after me in the sanatorium and all of them sly Medicine Men who entertained no partiality for the taste of mountain mould under snow. But I am so sorry for Dr. Frey. He was a very rare character and had lived richly and travelled widely and he looked after me with passionate devotion, listening at my ribs as a terrier listens for the movements of rats in a bottle of straw. He said I could go out for five minutes and this I did for the first time on the day of his death.

Catching cold during the 'five minutes' of his first outing, he was again confined to bed. But by the end of the month he was able to go out. 'I am really recovering, my lungs healing rapidly, and I can walk quite a distance,' he told Van Wyck Brooks on 31st January. 'It is a deep joy to me to walk again and I sit in the stables of the peasants and inhale the smell of the cattle dung as if it was baking bread.' To his brother Willie he wrote, 'My cough is better and every week I weigh one pound more and every day I feast and grow stronger.' 'I should have come here years ago,' he told Arthur Ficke: 'Every breath you breathe in this valley heals you.' But while in his joy at getting better, he made much of gaining a pound a week in weight, he admitted ominously that 'my digestion remains a difficulty.' He had hopes of a complete recovery by remaining in the rarefied mountain air. 'It may be that I shall try to stay out here for a year to make my cure more secure,' he wrote: 'We shall see how I am by May and June.'

News of his work was more encouraging in March. The reorganized firm of the Bodley Head announced publication of *The Twelve Months*, Watts were publishing *Rats in the Sacristy*, and Van Wyck Brooks, having taken charge of Llewelyn's manuscripts in New York at the New Year, wrote that Norton would publish *Earth Memories*,

including also a large part of *Dorset Essays*. This was his first book published in America since Lynd Ward's issue of *Now that the Gods are Dead* in 1932, and Llewelyn wrote on 1st March, 'God, I am grateful to you, Van Wyck—what a faithful friend you are, and always have been to me.' The encouragement was timely, for he told John on 12th March, 'From my publishers last year I made £17, from journalism £175.' Later in the year his work received handsome tribute when the Golden Cockerel Press published *A Book of Days*, edited by his friend John Wallis, with a quotation from his writings for each day of the year.

Rapidly he made friends among the Swiss peasantry as he had among the labourers of Dorset. 'I like very much going to the peasants,' he wrote to Arthur Ficke; 'I come back to Alyse smelling of the stables where I have sat.' From eager inquiry in conversation with Lisaly Gujer as interpreter, he learned much of the local manners and customs, as appears in the *Swiss Essays* originally contributed to various periodicals. The peasant children especially loved him, regarding him as an out-of-season Santa Claus, since he always had his pockets well stored with small gifts for them. It was at a children's home during the spring that he met W. G. Lockett, who was a native of Dorset and had been British consul at Davos for nearly forty years. Lockett died later in the year, but Llewelyn valued their few months of friendship. 'Our interests were very much the same,' he wrote in *Swiss Essays*. 'We were both old-fashioned, free-thinking liberals, and were both fond of literature, especially of English poetry.'

Having written to his cousin's widow, Lady Ferrers, for information about his Swiss ancestors, the Moilliets, he was interested to find that four of the race were still living at Geneva. 'It was amusing that the doctor's wife, the Queen of Clavadel, should be a Baumgartner,' he wrote to Littleton. 'Her great, great grandfather is the same as ours.' Besides collecting information for his essay on *The Swiss Family of Moilliet*, he probed the local associations of R. L. Stevenson and John Addington Symonds for *Symonds and Stevenson at Davos-Platz*, in *Swiss Essays*. There were still a few people who remembered Stevenson, and one old woman, as a girl of seventeen, had talked with Symonds.

When Louis Wilkinson came for a visit in May, they went together to see the pictures of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, a refugee in Switzerland from the Hitler régime.

We mounted a shaky staircase and walked along a narrow balcony until we reached a room which formerly, perhaps, had been used for storing hay. It was weather-tight but rough beyond conception. The pictures were piled against the walls. There must have been a hundred or more of them. Picture after picture was set before us by this pale passionate painter who was their creator. In spite of the strain that was put upon our emotional response before such an endless succession of canvases it was an experience never to be forgotten. Now there would be one in the flaming colours of the tropics and now one in the neutral tones of a pond under willows, and now another fainting away into the sunset shades of a fourth-dimensional world. It was as though this artist had been stripped of his skin and saw the earth and the people and beasts that walk together over the face of the earth with the nerves of his body.

During the following year, Llewelyn saw much of Kirchner, after whose suicide he wrote a sketch which, for vivid re-creation of personality, intimacy of illustrative anecdote, and shrewd selection of essential detail, can find few peers in periodical essays since Hazlitt. 'Death of a Painter: The Strange Genius of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner' appeared in *John o' London's Weekly* of 11th August, 1939, and is included in *Swiss Essays*.

Of his old friend's visit Llewelyn wrote to Littleton:

Louis has been staying here and it has been a great pleasure to me to be with him again, though with regard to nature he is deaf and blind. I have tried to laugh as little as possible, but I find it very easy to fall into our old ways.

Later in the month his sister Gertrude came. He was able to enjoy daily walks. His chest seemed to be 'getting better with every breath,' but his digestion prevented his gaining strength by hearty eating. 'Lisaly believes in eating and tempts me sometimes,' he wrote to Littleton. 'She cannot bear to see me eat sparingly as I have to do if I am to avoid my digestive troubles.' To Littleton he wrote on 24th March a long analysis of his digestive difficulties, showing that he was well aware of the need for care in his diet. Recommending light eating, Dr. Frey had warned him that 'my stomach required as much attention as my lungs.' In the first delight of recovery he fell 'into a bad way owing to my inordinate passion for cream,' but he reverted to an abstemious regimen after sick headaches and kidney pains, with blood in the urine. He realized that 'very little extra trout can give me a headache' and regretfully renounced 'the delicious creamy rice puddings' he had always relished.

'I could jump out of my skin with delight at being at liberty once more,' he wrote in May to Rivers Pollock. 'I only hope I do not

conduct myself foolishly and walk too far.' He knew the weakness of his recklessness, but 'climbing mountains' retained its old fascination for him. 'I try to be as careful as I can,' he told Louis Wilkinson, 'but these mountains excite my interest and walk up them I *must*.' And to Arthur Ficke he confessed, 'My great danger is now my old danger of over walking for I cannot content myself to stay in the valleys.'

Throughout the summer he continued well and full of joy in life. In September Gamel Woolsey, so long a neighbour in Dorset, whose poetry in *Middle Earth* Llewelyn admired and quoted freely in *Love and Death*, came for a week. 'We had the most lovely walks and each evening Alyse was so happy visiting her at the Mill.' Clifford Musgrave visited them soon afterwards, and a friendship with Arthur Waley was the closer from his being also a friend of Mona Gooden, wife of the distinguished artist and herself a writer and scholar whose appreciation of Llewelyn's work was the means of starting a sympathetic correspondence.

During October he suffered sick headaches and heart palpitation apparently from 'eating too much strawberries and milk in the Montacute fashion.' Confined for some days to the house by this disorder, he occupied himself with copious corrections of *Love and Death*, which he had finished during the summer. Justly pleased with the handsome volume of *Somerset Essays* published in November and accorded the praise now habitually lavished on all save his 'controversial' writings, he was prodigal with presentation copies, send-one to every descendant of the poet Shoc! at Montacute.

After a few days he was again walking. It was at this time that Kirchner sketched him in the woods, 'dancing about me between the trees for more than an hour, using up endless sheets of paper as he peered at me, now from behind this trunk, now from behind that.'

'Hello,' I thought, 'it is my soul he is after. He looks through my solid flesh as though it were glass, as though he were gazing at and scrutinizing an eft at the bottom of a pipkin of clear well-water.'

Despite his liking and admiration for Kirchner, Llewelyn did not think that he 'really won his confidence.' He attributed this to his own ignorance of the German language and to Kirchner's 'pride as a linguist, which would prompt him to pretend to understand more English than he really did.' When he saw Kirchner's picture of him,

'almost his last painting,' Llewelyn was convinced that the painter had gathered a mistaken impression of his character and opinions.

It would be recognized as Kirchner's handiwork in an instant. . . . What other artist could have created such a forest, a forest of such singing colours, with purples and greens and golds shaded into intellectual harmonies, harmonies exquisitely prepared for the sensual, animal eye? But alas! the central figure—look as I might I could feel no kinship with it. If this was Kirchner's vision of me I spurned it. All the egoism of my earth-born nature disclaimed relationship with this studio prophet, with this dainty idealist, with this slipper-slopper golden-locks who had not one wrinkle on his brow and who had never in his life bathed in a field ditch, mounted a horse, or heard a lion roar.

Truly the painting had little visual likeness. There was no suggestion of Llewelyn's handsome, corrugated brow and thick waving hair. But it seems that the artist discerned something of Llewelyn's essential quality, of his nobility and poetic fervour as well as of his intellectual power and impassioned sincerity, in portraying him like an Old Testament prophet, with steadfast eyes burning below a serene and massive brow.

As, with his gift for putting himself in accord with friends of quite different characters and tastes, each friend loved different facets of his personality, so in different moods his appearance seemed altered. It will be remembered that his wife, in her introduction to Llewelyn's *Letters*, emphasized this 'transformation in his looks,' and when Arthur Ficke received a snapshot taken in this summer of 1937, he commented on the 'picture of an old bearded peasant and his child sitting on the doorstep of a cottage':

There is also another person—a bearded man, tremendously handsome, aged, vigorous, benevolent, professorial—a person I have never seen before! He looks as if he were about to bless all the little children of the world and then die of utter saintliness. . . . By God, it is none other than my lewd friend Llewelyn!

It was soon after the last of several picnic expeditions with Kirchner that the St. Martin's summer of Llewelyn's recovery ended with a severe haemorrhage on 2nd December. In the following spring he wrote:

The freedom of last summer went to my head like God's best stingo. . . . My reckless summer walks over these mountains brought me to the very edge of loss. By October I knew I had overdone myself. I tried by resting to repair the damage but it availed nothing and I had a severe haemorrhage on December 2nd which lasted for a week, and have been in bed ever since.

After three days blood still poured freely from his frail body. For weeks following the familiar anxiety prevailed. Lisaly Gujer proved

a devoted nurse, sharing the bedside attendance with Alyse, including the reading aloud which beguiled the monotony of Llewelyn's 'freezing.'

At Christmas Louis Wilkinson came for a second visit, and finding Llewelyn too ill for much conversation, read to him Aldous Huxley's *Ends and Means*. As Llewelyn told Littleton in a published letter, he was impressed by this as 'an illuminating book,' and admired 'the clearness of his mind when not clouded by his new religious views and foolishness about the "non-attached" man.' To Brynmor Davies he confessed that the book 'had the effect of estranging me from this brilliant writer.'

I think his mystical inclinations indicate a sorry deterioration of a fine mind. To be unattached to this earth is to be dead to this earth. A wise man becomes unattached to this world and its ambitions, but never to food and wine and nature. The true secret of life is to be found in a man's capacity to illumine every sensible parcel of the physical world with his imagination.

The pessimism of writers like Huxley seemed to him calculated to encourage rather than to correct the apathy afflicting English youth. There was no scope for poetic faith, for joy in living, in *Brave New World*, and the satire excited only the sullen anger of cynical acceptance instead of fiery resentment against repression of natural happiness.

His illness did not prevent a Christmas party for the peasant children, with lighted candles on the Christmas tree and gifts for every child. In *Swiss Essays*, writing of 'Children of Switzerland,' he tells how, impressed by their naturalness, he attributed their 'happy liberation of spirit' to 'disenthralment from social preoccupations and social servilities' resulting from 'their being the children of freeholders.' In England, by contrast, village children follow the example of their wage-earning fathers in behaving with respectful deference to 'their betters,' the farmers, clergymen, and squires, so masking their natural emotional instincts and erecting the barrier of class.

The blood-spitting abated, but his temperature could not be brought down. When it did come down, his digestion prevented recovery of strength, for as soon as he forsook an abstemious invalid diet, he was seized with sick headache and kidney pains. His frame was wasted to a frail skeleton. The indomitable nobility of his massive head intensified the fragility of sickness and apparent age in his lined and haggard face and the thinness of arms and shoulders as he lay against his pillows. Helpless as a child, requiring assistance

for every intimate bodily function, he comported himself according to his philosophy of enjoying every moment of existence without pain. His radiant smile sent away every visitor feeling the happier for having seen him.

The four months following this haemorrhage were the harder to endure since he was unable to use his eyes either for reading or writing. Alyse and Lisaly Gujer shared long spells of reading aloud to him, relieved occasionally by visitors. Llewelyn rarely read modern books. As he read Aldous Huxley and formerly Hugh Kingsmill, at Louis Wilkinson's suggestion, he had attempted Ernest Hemingway at Valentine Ackland's, finding him 'an utterly valueless writer' with 'an essentially commonplace mind and a commonplace sensibility'—'an ephemeral and unpleasant projection out of the waste land of the modern cocktail party world!' He highly valued George Santayana and Bertrand Russell, and *The Realm of Matter*, *The Realm of Truth*, and *The Conquest of Happiness* were three of the books read aloud by Alyse at this time. He read Dr. William Brend's *Sacrifice to Atis*, in which he was attacked, with D. H. Lawrence, for having accused the churches of creating 'the sense of sin in matters of sex.' He wrote to Dr. Brend emphasizing that 'our mutinous frenzy was born of Christian suppressions.' He read little prose fiction, apart from the books of his brothers John and Theodore, though he renewed his enjoyment after many years with Maupassant's stories, *Don Quixote*, and *Tristram Shandy*. Poetry was his greatest pleasure. To Andrew Lang's translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* he repeatedly returned during these years in Switzerland. Alyse read to him the whole of Chaucer and *Piers Plowman*, with pauses to look up words in Skeat. She read Keats, Whitman, Matthew Arnold, and most of Milton, excluding *Paradise Lost*, and they often returned to Hardy's poems, the *Oxford Book of Ballads*, Walter de la Mare's anthologies, and the *Oxford Book of English Verse*. Montaigne, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Burton's *Anatomy*, and the Bible remained the favourites to which he never tired of returning. Alyse would read aloud from Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*, marking words at his direction, and Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary*, in which he found the same delight as Keats had done. She read to him Will Durant's *History of Philosophy*, which they had both read before, and Trevelyan's and Green's histories of England.

Reginald Marsh came to see him in March, and his brother Willie in April. It was not till April that he could again use his eyes for

writing, though not for reading, and at once he informed Littleton, 'I have begun writing again *for my living*.' The sales of his books were as disappointing as ever. 'I have never been praised more highly and never sold less,' he wrote on 20th April: '*Somerset Essays* not yet 700 copies and *Rats* not 200.' The handsome American edition of *Earth Memories* arrived to cheer him. He was 'delighted and proud of' the introduction by Van Wyck Brooks, to whom he wrote on 10th May, 'It is you who have made it possible for me to re-enter the market-ring again like a poor old nag at a fair, spavined and suffering from the bots, but I cannot believe that even your wonderful introduction will get the book to sell.' Reviews were heartening, many eminent critics writing enthusiastic tributes. 'Few contemporary writers,' wrote Paul Rosenfeld in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, 'possess as wide a range of literary and cultural reference as this good epicure, and few couch their experience in a prose with a finer seventeenth-century deliberateness and cadence.'

He continued to write essays, many of them afterwards included in *A Baker's Dozen* and *Swiss Essays*, some still uncollected. They appeared in a variety of English papers, *The Times*, *Morning Post*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Reynolds News* and the *Daily Herald*, the *New English Weekly*, the *Literary Guide*, and *John o'London's Weekly*, the *Dorset Daily Echo* and the *Western Gazette*. 'I think it is remarkable that my poetic vision and natural philosophy appeal to the popular taste of our distracted age,' he wrote. 'It shows that the masses have a hunger for these things beyond what any of us could have believed.'

He continued to receive frequent assurance of appreciation from unknown correspondents. Always he replied in frank terms of pleasure, usually adding maxims of pithy wisdom which encouraged the recipients to write again. His letters, like his essays, reveal the richness with which habitual reflection on life and literature had endowed his mind. 'Literature is always cheapened by politics,' he wrote to Mona Gooden: 'The real issues of life and its deepest emotional experiences lie below all these contemporary struggles, were before them and will outlast them.' 'Sensuality is the measure of a man's intelligence,' he wrote to Brynmor Davies, 'and the intelligence is the measure of a man's virtue.' And to Glyn Griffiths:

I beg you never to forget that the real success of a man's life has nothing to do with practical efficiency, but rather with the depth of his nature and the development of his consciousness of earth-existence, and with a vivid awareness of all the

tremulous approaches of his spirit to the mysteries of life. There is a great danger in the present day for young men to be intimidated by the mass psychology of the successful commercial world. . . . In spiritual matters he eccentric, inspired, and prepared at a moment's notice to flout the accepted standards of business, like a man who is following his own golden clue and does not regard the affluence of the world equal to the value of a fig.

'Remember that life is more important than any success,' he counselled Kenneth Hopkins, 'and to be aware of the rising and setting of the sun of more value than great wealth.'

When Louis Wilkinson paid his third visit in May 1938, Llewelyn was still in bed, though able to converse in a whisper. 'The doctor thinks not much lung tissue has been lost in this last brush,' he wrote to Van Wyck Brooks, 'and so I may well begin really to get better again, and this time I swear I will no longer live "dangerously" but keep to the valleys always and be content to sit upon fallen logs, water troughs, benches and kerbstones, enjoying the sun as is the heritage of a conscious beast who has been endowed with memory and imagination like a goblin.' On 4th June, just six months after his haemorrhage, he dressed for the first time. 'I begin to move about again,' he told Arthur Ficke, 'but am as weak as a fish.'

On 15th June Kirchner went out into the fields and shot himself. A few weeks before, when he had sat at Llewelyn's bedside, they had observed his look of suffering and madness. 'I think he was depressed by his pictures being defamed in Germany,' Llewelyn told his sister Katie, 'and also by his wife's breaking her arm and also from taking drugs.' Probably Kirchner was a martyr to the stupid persecution of political fanaticism. His eyes were 'vulnerable as a child's,' wrote Llewelyn in an obituary notice for the *Davos Courier* of 8th July, and 'on occasions when I was with him I have often wondered how a nature so delicately constituted had managed to survive as long as it had in our rude, ignorant and unenlightened world.'

During the summer Llewelyn enjoyed receiving many visitors. Rivers Pollock came with his wife early in July. It was the last time that Llewelyn was to see this friend, whose own sands were short in the glass and whose friendship had been so steadfast and devoted since Llewelyn and Alyse settled at the White Noŕe. An expert amateur photographer, Pollock had delighted Llewelyn in his exile by sending him snapshots of familiar Dorset scenes and he now took many photographs in Switzerland which Llewelyn proposed to use

as illustrations for his *Swiss Essays*. 'They were really happy days,' he wrote after the visit, 'and I do hope we manage to catch something of the spirit of the beautiful valley in our book.' Neither lived to see the book in print.

From New York his sister Marian and her son Peter Grey came to see him, soon followed by Mrs. Hildegard Watson, to whom *A Baker's Dozen* was dedicated as a mark of long friendship. His sister was saddened 'to see him so frail,' and in talking of old times she found difficulty in avoiding mention of Bertie, whose name excited emotion in Llewelyn disturbing to his delicate state. He was delighted with his sixteen-year-old nephew, 'a really exciting human being, very good looking, very intense and open to life.' Seeing him 'so beautiful, so imaginative, and so vulnerable,' Llewelyn longed to protect him, hoping 'he will not be destroyed by the crabbed world.'

He had no chance of being tempted by the mountains from his resolution to remain in the safety of the valley, for he never recovered his health of the previous summer. Quickly tired, he could walk only short distances. His digestion continued to deny the nutrition necessary to fortify his strength. His spells of partial recovery were as short-lived as sunshine in an English December. 'Some of us in Clavadel caught only the most fleeting glimpses of Llewelyn,' writes Donald Bradfield. 'We had seen him with the little peasant children playing round him in the garden, or we had watched him take his first short walks after a period in bed—and what a sense of enjoyment was conveyed in his every movement at such times—but his influence, conveyed through Alys Gregory, was very real on us all. It was always a sadness to hear that Mr. Powys was "not so well."' A young journalist seeking health at Clavadel, Donald Bradfield was one of the last personal friends made by Llewelyn, of whom he writes:

He had, of course, practically nothing in common with the majority of our little community in the Kurhaus opposite his cottage. Ours was the modern world of cocktails, wireless, and what he once called 'saucy supper parties.' To leave the Kurhaus and go into his cottage for tea was like going into a different world—even a different age. He struck me as being completely remote from anything that was artificial and quite out of sympathy with anything that was superficial. Like Alys Gregory, he had an eye for the deeper, more permanent values in human character. I found, during our conversation, that he showed less interest in the 'spectacular' personalities across the road than he did in the unobtrusive characters. I think he recognized the pretentious at first sight, and discovered something praiseworthy

and enduring in people who really had no notion of their own qualities. He saw the significant detail in the apparently trifling incident with the eye of a short story writer. . . . There was about him such an air of sympathetic understanding that must have involved him in the troubled affairs of heaven knows how many unhappy people. That is not to say he gave an impression of vulnerability, but it was easy to understand how a person in distress, seeing him face to face, would instantly recognize a wise and understanding friend.

In September indigestion caused Llewelyn acute discomfort and loss of sleep. Possibly it was intensified by anxiety about his brother Willie, who had proposed to visit him again on his return journey from England to Africa, but was compelled to a sudden change of plan by a serious operation for stomach ulcer. Llewelyn attributed his own disorder to eating the lean of ham 'in an attempt to get strength and a little fat,' but, as he told John, 'if I deviate an inch from my fruit and vegetable, egg and rice diet my kidney gets clogged or something.'

On 23rd September blood-spitting sent him back to bed. Able to use his eyes, he contented himself with final corrections of *Love and Death*. He had been so impressed by the beauty of *Early Mediaeval French Lyrics*, translated by Claude Collier Abbott, that he had written of his appreciation to the author and proposed to include quotations from the love lyrics in the chapter headings of *Love and Death*. A friendly correspondence followed, and Llewelyn wrote on 10th October to his brother Littleton:

Abbott has sent me two very delightful books of poetry (*Miss Bedell and Other Poems*, and *Ploughed Earth*), of country poetry which I think will give both of you great pleasure. His upbringing must have been very like our own. I do not think they are quite to be matched with his translations, but they are true poetry and very refreshing to read and very close to life with the same depth and the same high restraint.

To Littleton he wrote much about poetry, and sought to persuade him to write a study of the Dorset dialect poet, William Barnes, to which he proposed to contribute an introduction.

Through October he lay in bed, his recovery retarded by a bad cold. In the middle of November two days of blood-spitting inspired dread of another haemorrhage and induced him to suspend work and concentrate on complete quiet.

At this time he received from Ethel Mannin the visit described in her second volume of autobiography, *Privileged Spectator*, a title taken from the passage in Llewelyn's diary, quoted in *Welsh Ambassadors*, 'The art of living is to be fully aware of one's personal exis-

tence—to become a privileged spectator.’ Having heard much of Ilewelyn from Louis Wilkinson, she sent him a copy of an article written at the time of the Munich crisis in September 1938. ‘I liked you for writing it,’ replied Llewelyn, but he could not agree with her advocacy of pacifism to meet the current political situation.

It would be a most tragic thing for the world if the democratic countries did what you suggest. Nothing but force will stop force and it is perfectly easy to hold down and exploit subject peoples, it has often been done, and now that they are very ready to employ the old methods of torture, easier still. Bitter experience will in the end teach Germans, Russians, and English how atrocious war is—will teach them to have a real and equal league of nations, but not to resist violence with violence in an ultimate issue, when reason and cunning have done all they can, seems to me a great folly.

Like all comprehensive thinkers, he had long since made up his mind on broad social principles and ignored the petty routine of professional politics; with Voltaire, he preferred ‘general Reflexions’ to ‘that gloomy Labyrinth.’ But with his countryman’s innocence of artificial urban values and an imagination susceptible to the dramatic pageantry of history, he accepted the popular conception of celebrated statesmen as ‘great’ men of superior intellectual stature. Revolting from all tyranny, whether communist or fascist, appalled by atrocities, whether the purges of Stalin or the pogroms of Hitler, whether by Ogpu or by Gestapo, he had recognized when he wrote to President Roosevelt in 1934 the need for a firm stand by upholders of liberal principles. To him, unaware that politicians instinctively abandon principle to expediency, it was incredible that ‘reason and cunning’ had never been exerted to combat obvious evil. When, at the time of the Munich crisis, curious to know something of the minds of men who controlled the destinies of millions, he read Winston Churchill’s *Great Contemporaries*, he was ‘amazed by the limited visions and estimate of life of men of action.’

‘Men of genius,’ wrote Coleridge in his springtime of winged perception, ‘are rarely either prompt in action or consistent in general conduct: their early habits have been those of contemplative indolence; and the day-dreams, with which they have been accustomed to amuse their solitude, adapt them for splendid speculation, not temperate and practicable counsels.’ Everywhere in his writings Ilewelyn mentions war with detestation. ‘When will Europe rid herself of the wicked customs of her primal progenitors,’ he says in *Damnable Opinions*, ‘and realize that the sensual content of every

living being is the only reasonable purpose of life?' And in *Impassioned Clay* :

Who has ever seen lions banding together to fight with lions, or leopards banding together to fight with leopards, or monkeys banding together to fight with monkeys, or for that matter, sewage-rats banding together to fight with sewage-rats? Up to the present day there seems to us nothing particularly heinous in the world's recognition of a practice almost as perverted, almost as atrocious, as cannibalism.

'War is madness,' he acknowledged to Ethel Mannin, 'the most senseless and wicked way of reaching an equilibrium.' But having from the first recognized Europe's dictators as militaristic tyrants whose ambitions should have been stifled in embryo, he revolted from the Chamberlain policy of appeasement as a shameful condoning of crime. On 23rd September, in the midst of the Munich crisis, he wrote to Van Wyck Brooks:

Alyse who is a true pacifist remains confounded by the imminent horror of war. I find myself in lower waters, I seem devoid of real imaginative sympathy, I have to see or hear misery with my own eyes or ears before my compassion stirs, otherwise I find myself moved by a longing to see the curse of these modern tyrants removed from the face of the earth at any cost; save that of my own skin and the skins of those I most dearly love. And every time I am shamed by my indecent eagerness for War News which prevents me writing and involves my indolent receptivity of the simple and natural sensations of the passing days.

He recognized that his feeling was neither realistic, nor reasonable, nor consistent. 'I notice that politics show a rift in my thought,' he confessed to Littleton the following April, 'for logically I should say "Let it all go, *nothing matters*," enjoy the sunshine and contrive to go to sleep with a whole skin, but as an actual fact, so outraged do I become by the knavish tricks of these tyrants, that as an old Gladstonian liberal I am not far, I think, from a war-pusher!' It may be that his usual intellectual lucidity was clouded by his sickness. But, as he confessed to Rivers Pollock, 'my views on these vexed questions *are superficial*' and he had never studied the partiality of politicians for expedients. Accepting as truth their representations of a choice between peace with dishonour and war to extirpate tyranny, he chose the latter as the lesser evil.

He was too ill to see Ethel Mannin on her arrival at Clavadel, where she worked on her autobiography while waiting till he was well enough to see her. In *Privileged Spectator* she has recorded her impressions of the visit.

There was a room full of books and tapestries, and a loom by the window; there was a staircase with a snake-skin on the wall; there was a room with a tall stove,

and a bed in the corner. Then the swift awareness of a bearded, pointed face, a fine head, sensitive hands, kindly amused eyes. Suddenly I was no longer nervous, but strangely stirred. There was a light in the room that did not come from the windows, that was neither sunlight nor the light off the snow. A number of people have vivid personalities; very few have a presence. Llewelyn Powys has. Louis Marlow says of him that in his youth he had 'a sunlike look,' and that he was 'dazzlingly bright.' The description seems to me still entirely—richly—applicable. I have never known such charm, such tremendous charm; charm that kindles the senses like sunlight.

He gave her a copy of *Glory of Life*, just published in a popular edition by the Bodley Head after he had revised the original and 'improved the text.' In their subsequent correspondence, besides rejecting pacifism, Llewelyn defended his philosophy of life. 'You ought to live in some very secure place where you would not be molested by the noisy, empty, foolish world where everybody is consumed with ambition or avarice and scarce have time to eat, drink, and make love with any grace,' he wrote in a letter quoted in *Privileged Spectator*. 'You ought to escape and live without writing or talking or thinking for ten years.' Asking 'what becomes of the burden of my responsibilities, of those who look to me for material help and the championing of their struggle against injustice, if I retire to shadows and stillness,' she accused him of 'retreating into the artist's "ivory tower,"' and thought it easy for him, 'remote in his mountain valley, to rebuke one such as myself, necessarily, unavoidably, caught up in the struggles of suffering humanity, trapped by responsibilities, for leading an unquiet life.' To this Llewelyn replied:

I cannot but regard your use of so well-used a phrase as Ivory Tower as one of these hit-or-miss catch word blanket descriptions. It is true and not true, and is a slapdash ticket which saves you the trouble of a juster discrimination. My life has had nothing of the ivory tower about it and my philosophy has never been blind to the miseries of life. It builds from the bottom upwards. And its honesty and strength and truth are welcomed passionately by the very poor. It tries to build a little fish dam against the torrent of banal blindness that disfigures with befouled flood-waters that heightened awareness that can only enable the imagination to see through the phantom mists that close us in. Many unemployed and people on the dole can live by my clue which is spun of as good hemp as ever made 'a Bridport dagger.' It is sovereign redemption available for any mortal who has bread to eat and water to drink and is free from physical pain. I myself have lived no protected life. My favourable quarters at the moment are due to chance and luck. Until I was forty I was never able to have a cottage with a rent of £14 a year as I have now, but with my cursed distemper had to shift for myself as best I could. And so this is my justification. I have nothing to do with an ivory tower, but I do prefer the wilderness to the world and am careful to avoid people who are of the world worldly and allow the immediate pressure of day-by-day existence to possess

them. Poetry and distinction of thought and emotional sincerity are what attract me most in people. What is commonplace, second rate, and borrowed I don't at all care for. I like what is simple and close to nature and can be made easily happy by a feather or a straw—and entranced by the company of anyone as charged with grace, courage, and originality, and beauty as you are.

He could have indicated his final answer in *Glory of Life*, in *Impassioned Clay* and in the chapter on 'The Poetic Faith' in *Damnably Opinions*, where he emphasizes that 'all ethical imperatives are man-made' and that people 'are taught by those in authority that the purpose of life lies in a fretful utilitarian activity, with a half-satisfied acquisitive instinct as its high reward.' Instilled from infancy with the virtue of self-denial as a curb on natural instinct, modern man is swept by the social system into the vortex of a vicious circle, condemned to ceaseless acquisition by continual expenditure. Few choose to escape when they can, as Llewelyn chose to escape as soon as he could, to the modest retreat of a country cottage. Most are tempted, as Llewelyn might have been tempted to pursue his increasing prosperity in New York, by the bait of further acquisition, of more luxurious amenities, of more expensive pleasures, of superior credit in the estimation of their neighbours. Ironically ambition is admired by those same people that affect to value the virtue of self-denial. Demanding an adjustment of values, Llewelyn pleaded for the simple life of the senses, discarded by modern civilization for the allurements of worldly aggrandizement.

At the time of Ethel Mannin's visit Llewelyn was writing an essay on Gandhi, which he had been invited to contribute to a volume compiled in celebration of the Mahatma's seventieth birthday. Alyse read aloud to him Gandhi's *Autobiography*, and while the Indian's mysticism was alien to his thought, Llewelyn wrote to Mona Gooden that 'throughout all his Sunday-school delusions the sweetness and simplicity of his being charm me to the navel.' Describing the reading of Gandhi's autobiography as 'truly a revelation as to the triumph of the spirit over the body,' he called his essay 'The Triumph of the Spirit.' 'It is impossible,' he wrote, 'to associate him with the sort of spiritual vanity that so infects our own idealists, whether secular or clerical.'

If ever the secret of Jesus has been practically proven, it has been so by this saintly Hindu. This is perhaps why the words of Jesus are so often upon his lips though he is far too clear a thinker, and has far too honest a mind, to accept the dogmas and theological inventions of our Western faith. . . . He was always strongly attracted to the Christian ideal of self-sacrifice, and the Sermon on the Mount, with

all its manifold implications, made a deep impression on him. Nietzsche uttered once the piercing paradox, 'There has been only one Christian and he died on the cross.' Perhaps if the frenzied philosopher had lived long enough to observe the manner of life of this other Guru he would have qualified his celebrated quip.

The essay on Gandhi is biographically significant as illustrating the detachment of Llewelyn's lucid perception. It is fashionable among European supporters of Gandhi's political aspirations to deprecate his religious ideals as the disconcerting eccentricities of genius or even as deplorable chicanery intended to impress the ignorant masses of his countrymen. But Llewelyn, with a philosophy as remote from Gandhi's as that of Epicurus from Plato's, immediately appreciated that Gandhi's political and social power essentially derived from the invincible integrity and passionate sincerity of his beliefs.

Still in bed at Christmas, he entertained to tea, with a demeanour of sunny benignity and quizzical humour, his four favourites among the peasant children, little girls aged from six to nine. During his exile he did not forget his friends at East Chaldon. Each year presents were dispatched in time to reach his small friends among the villagers by Christmas. Among the last words ever written by his hand was a carefully compiled list of gifts and their intended recipients, to be used by Alyse in sending an order to a large London store.

Occasional blood-spitting revived fear of another haemorrhage and he could not gain strength to heal his lungs. 'My difficulty is not being able to digest fat, meat, or milk,' he told Bernard Taylor. 'I live on eggs and vegetables and fruit and even then get headaches; in consequence I am bones and pelt and nothing more.' In February his condition was endangered by an attack of influenza, from which he recovered sufficiently to come down to lunch in a dressing-gown for the first time for months on 21st March, 1939. But he was soon permanently in bed again. Alyse read to him the writings of Paracelsus, and books about him, in preparation for one of the last essays he ever wrote, 'Paracelsus' appearing posthumously in the *Nineteenth Century* before inclusion in *Swiss Essays*. 'Next to Blake,' as he told Van Wyck Brooks, he regarded Paracelsus as 'the most honourable mystic I know.'

When unable to read or write, he found an occupation in cross-stitch wool work, 'or "sticking" as they call it in Switzerland.' A sample of his skill in this work survives in a book-cover made for a copy of the 'Travellers' Library' edition of *Black Laughter*, as a gift to a girl who was dying of consumption at Clavadel. He never saw

the girl, but Alyse regularly visited her, and, in recounting her conversations to Llewelyn, told him of how she spoke, among childhood reminiscences, of a terrier dog and a lilac tree she had loved. Llewelyn worked the dog and the tree into the design of the cover. The inscription in the book is dated 'May 1939.'

This girl is the subject of an anecdote told by Donald Bradfield to illustrate Llewelyn's capacity for sympathy and understanding.

I remember when a young woman patient communicated certain fears to the chaplain as she lay dying. The chaplain, a kind-hearted, conscientious young man and a friend of Llewelyn's, seemed to miss the particular quality of her distress, and merely added to her fears in his attempts to give comfort. Llewelyn was ill in bed when he heard of it, but he straight away sent up to the girl a note which showed how surely he understood her predicament. The letter, a true philosopher's letter, did not merely express sympathy, but pointed out the way where she might find peace of mind. It must indeed have been a 'windfall of thought' for the poor distracted girl. I believe Llewelyn also comforted and advised the young chaplain who was downcast at the idea of failing the young woman. I have a recollection that he told the clergyman that on these deathbed occasions it were best for him to forget his Bible and his Prayer-book and be guided solely by his instincts as a human being. . . . Perhaps only a person who had lived close to death would have had the impulse to have written such a letter; certainly only a philosopher could have written it.

The girl used to read the letter 'over and over, and kept it always beside her.' Unluckily it was destroyed after her death, though the book and its cover were returned to Alyse.

For some time Llewelyn laid aside even his cross-stitching in case 'the slight continual movement of my right arm disturbs the healing process.' But, though still in bed when Louis Wilkinson came in May, he was stronger and again writing. He revised *Ebony and Ivory* for reprinting in the sixpenny 'Penguin Books,' taking pleasure in this revival of his earliest work. It was Louis's fourth visit, and Llewelyn wrote of his old friend to his sister Lucy, 'I have very much enjoyed having Louis, the Archangel, here for ten days, very well and as good company as ever and very tender of me.'

On 1st May *Love and Death* was published in England by the Bodley Head, but not until 1941 was it published in America by Simon and Schuster. 'My *Love and Death* I can't get placed in America,' wrote Llewelyn to Arthur Ficke, 'and yet in my opinion it is the best book I have written.' Its rejection by Norton was especially disappointing since *Earth Memories*, after lavish praise by the critics, had sold out its first thirteen hundred copies and required a second impression. 'I think,' wrote Llewelyn shrewdly to Van Wyck Brooks on the

rejection of *Love and Death* by Norton, 'it must be its philosophic realism combined with its unreal romanticism that spoils the pie for the modern reader.'

His suspicion was confirmed by some of the more fashionable English reviewers. 'I seem to detect a clear separation between town and country,' wrote Llewelyn after reading the reviews. 'The younger urban critics were inclined to jeer and scoff after their manner, whereas the critics in the provincial papers were almost all responsive and often very enthusiastic.' Not only the provincial critics were responsive, for *The Times Literary Supplement* declared, 'It is very, very rarely that we are given such a story as this, wonderfully well written, and having in it that stuff of reality beneath the garment of words which gives it a claim to immortality.' Nor were there wanting younger critics able to appreciate the poetry and romantic beauty of the book. Gwyn Jones in the *Welsh Review* thought this 'sustained lyric in prose' was 'a book to slip in alongside *Daphnis and Chloe* on the shelf nearest your armchair, for anyone who has not said farewell to that classic of primal innocence and country love is likely to re-read *Love and Death*.' A young novelist, Angela du Maurier, feeling that 'it is so seldom one reads anything that has such romance, such poetry, such a glory of the countryside that one can smell it, as it were from the very pages,' was moved to write personally to Llewelyn, whom she had never met, to tell him of her pleasure.

Long after Llewelyn's death Theodore Dreiser wrote, 'His last book, *Love and Death*, I think is one of the most beautifully tragic books I have ever read, and one in which the true spirit of Llewelyn comes through with great clarity and force.' And when the book was published in America, critics united in appreciation. 'In the rarity and passionate sensitiveness of his last book,' wrote Katherine Woods to conclude a long article in the *New York Times Book Review*, 'he has left the free poetic testament of earth's ancient beauty, that can be caught in a moment and known as imperishable.'

It seems therefore that Llewelyn had just reason to suspect something wrong with those reviewers who were inspired to no finer impulse than to 'scoff and jeer.' To Littleton he had deprecated an author's resentment of disparaging criticism. 'A reviewer should give his personal impression *in full*, good and bad,' he wrote. 'If anyone is shooting far from the mark he should be corrected and even roughly if he deserves.' Three reviewers, writing in influential

papers normally to be relied upon for reputable criticism, exhibited such shooting as excited wonder at their pretensions to critical marksmanship.

In the *New Statesman and Nation* Mr. Geoffrey Parsons seemed to cherish strange notions regarding the average readers of the most eminent literary weekly advocating liberal principles, since he selected from *Love and Death* 'passages which would put the taxi-driver off at first dip.' Llewelyn's style, which 'hovers uncomfortably between prose and poetry,' he found 'almost unreadable,' mainly on account of 'his ability to make of his sentences a never-ending daisy chain of poetic images.' With relief he passed from *Love and Death* to consideration of the first of four other autobiographical books under review. 'I must confess that after exploring the emotions with Mr. Powys I thoroughly enjoyed relaxing with Mrs. Rorke, whose exuberant story begins with her elopement from a South African convent at the age of 14, from which moment her life was as full of adventure as a Pearl White serial. When she wasn't slap in the middle of a war, she was, at the very least, sitting on a snake.'

In the *Bystander* Mr. V. S. Pritchett evidently felt sympathy with the taste of Mr. Parsons, since he devoted to Mrs. Melina Rorke's lively adventures more than twice the space bestowed upon *Love and Death*. Apparently 'unaware,' as Llewelyn remarked, 'that the creation of a peculiar atmosphere may often exact "honourable artifice" from a writer,' Mr. Pritchett quoted a single sentence from one idyllic scene as a sample of what he called 'this kind of Morte D'Arthur Jabberwocky.' While admitting that 'Mr. Powys's passionate literary paganism . . . rises at times to lyrical heights despite its mediaeval posturings,' he pronounced that 'as a story this is a negligible and conventional affair.'

As hard-worked as his contemporaries, Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge, after dispatching four other books in his article for the *Daily Telegraph*, had only a paragraph left for discussion of *Love and Death*. Evidently deciding to be nothing if not slick and smart, he concluded his brief notice by quoting for the purpose of a five-word comment, an extract from the concluding paragraph of Alyse's introduction to the book, which Llewelyn considered, 'under the circumstances, a moving and magnanimous tribute.'

'Is it too much to prophesy,' Mrs. Powys asks in her Introduction, 'that this volume of my husband's . . . will be read and enjoyed by men and women long after his bones have come to dust?' In my opinion it is,

'These last five words,' wrote Llewelyn, 'are as good an example as may be of that neat, light, snickering touch in which the typical popular reviewers of our time show so deft an accomplishment.'

In the past critics were accustomed to reserve for each other their most corrosive acids. Dryden and Shadwell, Dennis and Pope, Hazlitt and Lockhart, exchanged blow for blow. But in our genteel decadence critics concentrate on creative writers, amongst whom it is conventional to condescend to no reply, and when a professional critic publishes a selection of his lucubrations, his fellows raise a chorus of discreet acclamation, imposing an obligation to be treated similarly themselves. Deciding that it was time for some exposure of the more vicious practices among reviewers, Llewelyn wrote an essay on 'Modern Town Critics and Debatable Literature.'

He began by remarking how the great critics, from Dryden and Johnson to Arnold and Pater, had been succeeded at the close of the last century by a 'solid sensible body of well informed men' who delivered 'careful academic discriminations,' like Leslie Stephen, Saintsbury, Quiller-Couch, and Clement Shorter. These had few obvious successors, apart from such as Sir John Squire and Mr. Basil de Selincourt, but there were several of less pontifical reputation, 'as serious as they are professional,' and 'amongst these truly expert assessors' he placed 'Mr. I. A. Richards, Mrs. Q. D. Leavis and Mr. F. R. Leavis, Mrs. Virginia Woolf, Mr. Peter Quennell, Mr. Raymond Mortimer, Mr. Edwin Muir, and perhaps Mr. T. S. Eliot.' But 'below and behind this eclectic company there follows a barbarous rout of jostling, jocular journalists who scramble their way to the front in every popular newspaper,' and whose 'eligibility . . . for the tasks they usurp seems largely to rest on their remarkable aptitude in appropriating for journalistic ends the current parrot-patter.'

I read the comments of many of our literary guides and am astonished by the paucity of their imaginations, the aridity of their conclusions, and their utter ignorance of the humble merits of good prose. When I look for refreshment in the current journals my palate undergoes a withering sensation as though wood-alcohol were being sprinkled over it. It is for this reason that I would beg the readers of this paper to be indulgent to the self-absorption that prompts a crotchety man towards so audacious an undertaking as the attempted reviewing of his reviewers.

He proceeded to a shrewd analysis of sundry symptoms of the reviewing disease before concluding with a discussion of the reviewers of *Love and Death*. Among other points, his exposure of irrelevant

impertinence recalled the sort of criticism that excited D. H. Lawrence to exclaim, 'Journalists are all *canaille*,' and his contrast of the countryman's artistic approach with the townsman's echoes Henry Williamson's attack on 'most modern literary criticism' as 'urban, rootless, cosmopolitan in feeling, in keeping with modern square and rectangular architecture, cocktails, jazz, celluloid sex, and factory-made furniture of imported kiln-dried wood, no heart or sap in it.'

It was a timely protest from one who had arrived at the eminence of an elder man-of-letters. Before attempting to publish it, Llewelyn submitted the essay in turn to John, to Louis Wilkinson, and to Stephen and Mona Gooden. Louis Wilkinson and the Goodens approved publication with little alteration, but John advised omission of the personal references. But it was not deference to John's opinion that deterred Llewelyn from offering the essay for publication. War was declared, and he wrote to Louis Wilkinson: 'I decided not to send my paper against the critics to be published at present because it seemed *unseemly* in these times when the young men I gird at have knapsacks bumping against their ——.'

During the summer he struggled vainly to gain weight and strength. Late in June he was well enough to walk in the garden, enjoying the sunshine in white flannels, but he was too weak to walk far. During long hours of lying in bed, he enjoyed Alyse's reading aloud the twelve volumes of Proust, of whom he wrote to Littleton:

I am sure he is by far the most important writer of *our* generation. I am always amazed at his vision so lucid, so objective, so subjective, so deeply poetic—so untouched by 'moralic acid.' I have learned and do learn from him enormously.

Later he enjoyed *Candide*—'What a book, how lightly it laughs and what sure strokes!'

On 5th August he wrote to his sister Lucy:

I hope I am getting better slowly. I still don't walk much but when it is sunny take great pleasure in the garden where I lie under a mountain ash tree enjoying the butterflies and flowers and examining with my magnifying glass any beetle that flies on to me.

Mrs. Scott-Maxwell came to stay 'at the Mill,' and discussed with him the theories of Jung, 'a psychologist I suspect and whose books I *cannot* read.' Her visit was followed by those of some American friends, Mrs. H. S. Canby and Miss Agnes de Lima, with her

daughter. He was looking forward to a visit from his sisters Gertrude and Katie in September, but the war prevented their coming.

The declaration of war against Hitler's Germany came almost as a relief to him. In the spring, as appears in his published *Letters*, he had roused Rivers Pollock's resentment by his pungent comments on Chamberlain's rudderless vacillation on the rape of Prague. 'The fact that his first reaction to this crisis was so calm that it almost amounted to indifference (I mean in the Commons) seemed to me in the light of his sudden change at Birmingham to reveal his disposition to place political contrivance and party manoeuvring above what has been in the past, and I hope will be in the future, England's traditions.'

To Mrs. Gooden he wrote on 30th August:

Though my own wit and wisdom tell me that peace at any price should be the cry, yet against all Alyse's pacifism I am stiff as a stork; indeed, seeing that I shall not have to fight, I am resolute as a Roman and would counsel to put an end to the rascals *or be ruined in the attempt*. . . . Only the suspicion that England is faltering can ruffle my calm.

And on the fateful 3rd September to Willie:

I was most nervous lest England might not stand firm for I would rather see England fall honourably than live by sagacity alone. It is a foolishness, for all I want, with my reason, is to be allowed to enjoy a few last months or years with honour or without honour, but this concern about England's conduct was actually what gave me anxiety. I hope, and deeply hope, that out of this bloodshed a new and happier and juster world will rise. . . . No wide or generous allowance of happiness will come to the world while man's mind and body are not free. The individual is of more importance than the state.

Having so long recognized the need to stand resolutely against the threat to liberal principles, he was satisfied that at last the stand was being taken. He neither recriminated the policy of unprincipled vacillation which precipitated the crisis, nor visualized the possibilities of war's defeating its end by subordinating individual to state interests. On the eve of quitting the world, he found himself almost for the first time in agreement with popular opinion.

In September blood-spitting sent him back to bed, but up again in October and taking short walks, he thought the rest 'may have helped me a little' and 'I hope I really am better now. . . . My chest is surely better.' Unhappily his chest, the seat of dread for thirty years, was no longer the chief source of danger.

Throughout October he enjoyed short walks and lying under the

ash-tree in the garden. Still occupied by his essay on 'Paracelsus,' he enjoyed correcting the proofs of *A Baker's Dozen*, published in America by the Trovillion Press, with an introduction by Lloyd Emerson Siberell, to whom he wrote, 'I was moved to see this testament of your long fidelity to my writing.' At the end of the month he was troubled by sick headaches, but he wrote to Littleton on 7th November, 'I certainly am better since August and if it was not for this cursed war would feel merry enough and full of Hope.'

He finished 'Paracelsus,' his last work except a Christmas essay. His sick headaches continued, and on 19th November he wrote to Willie:

I have got myself into difficulties with my poor belly, I think from eating *every day* a little very good cured ham with a little cream each morning in my porridge, and this has made my stomach sore and started my heart palpitating for the last fortnight, 'the heart and the belly being bad neighbours,' as old Goodden used to teach. But I hope with care all will be got into order again. My temperature has been uncertain but this is caused I believe by the very bad weather—otherwise I feel much better in myself and firmer *on my pins* and pop out of bed with more confidence to look at the red elf on the mountain or a star in the east. What a wonder if I really get better again!

It was his last letter. The same day he suffered an attack of blood vomiting like that at Chydyok in the autumn of 1932.

The final scene is described by Alyse in her introduction to the *Letters*. Dr. Häberlin, who had succeeded Dr. Frey in charge of Llewelyn's case, spared no effort to save him. Afterwards he wrote: 'I am thankful to fate which threw Llewelyn in my path; he will, even only a short moment in a long life, shine out as a bright star through the general dullness of human beings: his sensitive attitude to life and his courageous attitude towards death have made an imperishable impression on me.' Allowed to swallow nothing, Llewelyn received nourishment by injection. He was given four blood transfusions. After the third the doctor decided that, despite the danger of his weak state, only an operation could save his life. Llewelyn had always disliked operations as contrary to nature, and on hearing the doctor's opinion, 'he said not as a man who is taken off his guard, but as one who has many times faced and accepted the truth, "I am not afraid to die."'

When his doctor proposed to call in a consultant, Llewelyn consented to an operation if both doctors agreed on its advisability. But the consultant, a specialist in stomach complaints, advised against an operation. The autopsy revealed 'a chronic ulcer in the descend-

ing part of the duodenum.' At the base of the ulcer were 'multiple necroses, extending as far as the head of the pancreas' and affecting a medium-sized artery 'which had become arroded'; there was also 'the open stump of a blood vessel, from which at the slightest pressure blood was sickering.' The cause of death was a haemorrhage from the ulcer flooding the intestines. The condition was so complicated that he would undoubtedly have died under an operation.

Bleeding began again, and feeling that it was against nature to seek to prolong his life, he resigned himself to death. 'They are dragging me the wrong way,' he said. 'I have had a happy life and I wish to be allowed to die in the end like a follower of Epicurus.' Once he proposed to take his life, but was persuaded by Alyse's plea that he should not yet give up hope. Repeatedly he declared that he had had a happy life. Only once, in a mood reminiscent of his diaries of thirty years before, he expressed emotion other than resignation, with the words, 'I am a *little* disconsolate,' 'spoken as a boy might speak who has learned that a decision has gone against him.' On Saturday, 2nd December, 1939, at 2.30 a.m. on the third anniversary of his leaving England, he died after an injection of morphia.

The disposal of his body was carried out according to his wishes. No service was said over him. His remains were cremated and the ashes enclosed in a metal box. War regulations prevented their being brought immediately to England for burial on the Dorset downs.

It is yet early to predict the place destined for Llewelyn in the literary hierarchy. Half a century hence his essays may stand on the same shelf with Lamb and Hazlitt, his *Love and Death* may rank among the great romances, his prose may be rated high in the tradition of Landor and Pater. To-day his philosophy and the lesson of his gallant life address a poignant appeal to a rising generation devastated by war, disillusioned with discredited faiths, derelict upon the shifting waters of shallow expedients. When he knew that he was dying, he asked for pen and paper to write his 'last word' to the world he was leaving. 'Love Life! Love every moment of life that you experience *without pain*.' The message appears in all that he has written, though presented most directly, effectively, and poetically in *Impassioned Clay* and *Glory of Life*. His 'poetic faith' provides a practical philosophy for the uttermost enjoyment of earthly happiness. Its universal adoption would decisively banish the misery and disaster incurred by allegiance to the superstitious expedients of the past. His teaching offers a torch to a new era of

enlightenment, and the story of his life is important as an example of successful practice of his own philosophy. For without wealth, despising worldly ambition, and despite a continual struggle for health, he enjoyed a happy life and could write among the last words that his fingers ever traced, 'Now that my hours so sharply shorten (and I never was dull to passing moments) I look back to the most inconsequential and accidental of them with the liveliest regret and yearning *to have them again.*'

Postscript

OWING to the reticence of friends and relatives, it is almost an axiom that the true story of a man's life can be written only about half a century after his death, when there are no longer living contemporaries to be embarrassed by disconcerting revelations. Previously my own most recent subject of biography was Charles Reade, who died in the same year as Llewelyn Powys was born. Though Thackeray had been dead for nearly seventy years when I wrote about him, my book achieved its measure of completeness only by the mediation of the late Leonard Huxley and the courtesy and discrimination of the owners of Thackeray's copyrights.

But Llewelyn Powys belonged to an artistic family contemptuous of commonplace inhibitions. In his autobiographical books and essays he wrote of himself with the freedom and frankness of a philosopher and seeker after truth. During his life he allowed his friend Louis Wilkinson ('Louis Marlow') to make unreserved use of his early letters and diaries in writing of himself and his family. His eldest brother, John Cowper Powys, has written in his *Autobiography* the most searching exposition of self-revelation in modern literature; another brother, Littleton Powys, has also written a book of reminiscences. Since his death there has already appeared in England one volume of his letters, which, in itself probably the most important collection of literary letters since Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, is only the predecessor of a larger volume to be published after the removal of paper restrictions.

It might be argued that, since Llewelyn, who may eventually claim his place as a prose-writer in the dynasty of Landor and Pater, has written so abundantly of himself, a biography would be an undertaking both superfluous and presumptuous. But his autobiographical books describe selected epochs of his life's experience—*Black Laughter* his five years in Africa, *The Verdict of Bridlegoose* his five years in America, *Skin for Skin* mainly a single summer in his youth. With the scenes snatched from teeming memories in *Love and Death* and in the reminiscent essays of *Earth Memories*, *Dorset Essays*, *Somerset Essays*, and *A Baker's Dozen*, they whet the appetite for a detailed knowledge of his life's background.

While a biography may thus fulfil a humble function as a handbook of reference for readers of his autobiographical books, it may also present a commentary on the growth of a great mind. *The Letters of*

Llewelyn Powys is a remarkable book because it reveals the gradual progress of an inquiring mind from the hesitant probings of adolescence, through testing vicissitudes of sickness and struggles for self-vindication, to a maturity of wisdom and a healing serenity which won gratitude and affection from all his acquaintance. The superficial may see Llewelyn's simply as a life lived gallantly under the shadow of insidious disease; the more discerning will recognize that it was a life lived with an integrity rare in human history.

Of his philosophy epitomized in *Impassioned Clay*, *Glory of Life*, and *Damnable Opinions*, he once remarked to a young disciple, 'It is a very simple song that I sing.' It was as simple as the message preached in Palestine that he himself attempted to elucidate and divest of spurious trappings in *The Cradle of God* and *The Pathetic Fallacy*. Through twenty centuries the message of Jesus has been deemed too simple to solve the complexity of human problems; it is therefore not surprising that critics scoff at Llewelyn's philosophy of happiness as a solution too simple for acceptance. The most satisfying answer to the scoffers lies in the story of Llewelyn's life. For he was that rare phenomenon—a philosopher who lived according to his own philosophy. His life may serve as an object-lesson to students of values, the more opportunely at a time when all humanist standards have been dragged in the dirt of propagandist expediency and normally enlightened persons shrug tolerant shoulders at abominations shameful to civilization.

His friend Arthur Davison Ficke kindly permits me to print this 'Memorial for Dead Friends,' which, he says, 'is no exact picture of real persons but . . . nevertheless a dream-picture of my beloveds John and Llewelyn.'

When I remember my immortal dead
And see the eyes that in a former time
Looked at me, and recall the splendor shed
God-like by those tall figures in their prime—
And do not quite forget how one man spoke,
And how one strode, and how another stood
When the word came beneath which at a stroke
His lofty tree splintered to useless wood—
And how another, prouder than the rest,
Accepted once my hand in evil hour,
And how another from his own racked breast
Brought me a secret and most healing power—
Then I desire to live, at any cost,
Lest when I die these memories should be lost.

Mr. Ficke appended this sonnet when, within three months of Llewelyn's death, war conditions rendering imprudent the transmission across the Atlantic of original documents, he made copies of Llewelyn's letters to him for inclusion in the projected collection of *Letters*. Visualizing preservation of the copies by Llewelyn's literary executors for use by a future biographer, he wrote:

And you, whoever you may be, into whose hands these papers may someday fall, I think I will permit myself the liberty of speaking a word to you. It will be too late for you to seek out any Powyses and love them, for they will all be dead then. But I advise you, and in no uncertain terms, to value as you value your life such friendships as may be possible for you in your own day: for as you grow older, you will find that wealth, power, fame, even your own honest achievements, seem unimportant; but you can never lose the splendor of having loved and having been loved by a few great spirits.

It has been my good fortune to become Llewelyn's biographer while eight of his brothers and sisters still survive. When she found that I felt the necessary sympathy with Llewelyn's work and philosophy, his widow and literary executor, Miss Alyse Gregory, placed unreservedly at my disposal all his papers, letters, and diaries. Throughout fifteen months, while I was sifting material and writing the book, she submitted to a ceaseless battery of questions. She withheld nothing from my knowledge. Her only reservation was a wish, repeatedly emphasized, that she herself should seem no more than a shadow in the background of her husband's life.

It was never part of my plan to attempt any account of the close partnership between husband and wife, a conjugal relation bound the more closely by common sympathy in ideas, interests, and pursuits. A detached analysis of such an intimacy is manifestly impossible during the lifetime of one of the principals. On the other hand, it may be judged a fault that, in describing their mutual preoccupations, I have omitted reference to her literary work and inadequately illustrated the measure of her contribution to their partnership. But these omissions are in deference to her wish, a wish the more easily revered since she so generously gave her earnest co-operation and the benefits of a wise and richly endowed mind.

Any other reservations or suppressions are dictated simply by decent consideration for the feelings of persons still living. Nothing has been withheld from regard for Llewelyn himself, and I have sought faithfully to tell the truth of him, as he would have desired. Readers of their books will appreciate that no cross-currents of

reticence emanated from his eldest brother, Mr. John Cowper Powys, or from his old friend, Mr. Louis Wilkinson. To both I owe a deep debt of gratitude for their unfailing patience in answering questions, searching their memories, and explaining their reactions to subjects of discussion and to experiences shared with Llewelyn. With characteristic generosity Mr. Powys permitted free use of his letters to Llewelyn, as well as quotation from his published works, including his *Autobiography*. I have also enjoyed the privilege of quoting from Mr. Wilkinson's published works, including the two books, published under the name of Louis Marlow, containing so much valuable material about the Powys family, *Swan's Milk* (Faber and Faber, 1934) and *Welsh Ambassadors* (Chapman and Hall, 1936). With Miss Gregory they share the god-parentage of this biography; like her, they completed the sum of my debt to them by reading the book in typescript and in proof.

From Llewelyn's other brothers and sisters I have received much generous kindness and help. Miss Gertrude Mary Powys supplied me with information about the family ancestry, read the book in typescript and checked many details of fact, and has kindly permitted reproduction of her sketch of Llewelyn at Clavadel. Mrs. Marian Powys Grey wrote from New York her personal recollections of Llewelyn and sent illuminating extracts from family letters. Mr. Littleton Powys, besides allowing quotation from his memoirs, *The Joy of It* (Chapman and Hall, 1937), supplied reminiscences of Llewelyn's boyhood and was always generously ready to answer questions. To the only brother who pre-deceased Llewelyn, the late Mr. A. R. Powys, this book is also indebted, since I had the privilege of reading and quoting from many of his letters to Llewelyn and to Miss Gregory.

For the loan of letters, for personal reminiscences and other items of information I am indebted to many of Llewelyn's friends and correspondents. I hope no name is omitted from this list of those to whom my grateful thanks are due: Mr. Donald Bradfield, Mr. Theodore Dreiser, Mr. Arthur Davison Ficke, Mr. Robert Gibbings, Mr. George Glasgow, Mr. Douglas Goldring (who also permitted quotation from his autobiography, *Odd Man Out*, Chapman and Hall, 1935), Miss Lola Catesby Jones, Miss Ethel Mannin (who also permitted quotations from her second volume of memoirs, *Privileged Spectator*, Hutchinson, n.d.), Mr. Reginald Marsh, Mrs. Naomi Mitchison, Mr. Clifford Musgrave, Dr. Bernard Price O'Neill,

Mr. John Rowland, the Hon. Ralph Shirley, Sir John Squire, Mr. Ralph Straus, Miss Vera Wainwright, Mr. John Wallis, Mr. Frank Whitaker, and Dr. Herbert G. Wood. Miss Barbara Hammond of the *New Statesman* kindly identified Llewelyn's early contributions to that journal. Acknowledgment is due to Sir Newman Flower and Messrs. Cassell for an extract quoted from *The Journals of Arnold Bennett*, edited by Newman Flower, Cassell, 1932-33.

MALCOLM ELWIN.

WOODY BAY

1944-5

Chronology of Events in the Life of Llewelyn Powys

1884	August 13	Born at Rothesay House, Dorchester, Dorset.
1885	Dec.	Rev. C. F. Powys became Vicar of Montacute, Somerset.
1893	April 20	His sister Nellie died.
1895	Sept.	Entered the 'Prep.' at Sherborne.
1896		J. C. P. married Margaret Alice Lyon.
1899	January	Entered Sherborne School.
	Spring	Attack of whooping cough, leaving chest weakness.
1901	Sept.	T. F. P. went to live at Studland.
1902	Spring	J. C. P.'s influence on Llewelyn began.
	Summer	At Studland with Dr. O'Neill. Met 'Angela.'
1903	Jan.-May	His first extant diary.
	April 14	Left Sherborne.
	June 22	Sat for Previous Examination at Cambridge.
	October	Matriculated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Met Louis Wilkinson.
1904	Summer	T. F. P. moved from Studland to East Chaldon.
	August 4	Littleton Powys married Mabel Bennett at Bruton.
	Nov. 13	Founded 'The Club of the Honest Cods' at Corpus.
1905	Summer	Louis Wilkinson left Cambridge.
1906	June	Left Cambridge. 'Ploughed' in History Tripos.
	Summer	At Montacute.
	Nov. 29	Passed final examination at Cambridge.
1907	April 26	Became assistant master at St. Peter's, Broadstairs.
	Nov. 22	Became assistant master at Bromsgrove.
1908	April	Left Bromsgrove. Planned to live with T. F. P. and 'write for the papers.'
	May 5-Aug. 3	Private tutor at Calne.
	Autumn	With J. C. P., reading for lectures.
	Dec. 19	Sailed to America with J. C. P. to lecture.
1909	April 6	Returned from America.
	May 6	Became assistant master at Sherborne Preparatory School.
	June 24	Left Sherborne for Devon.
	July-Aug.	Mainly with J. C. P. at Sidmouth, Burpham, and Montacute.
	Sept.	Visited the Lintons at Shirley.
	Sept. 15	Returned to Sherborne.
	Nov. 3	Taken ill with tuberculosis at Sherborne.
	Dec. 10	Arrived at Clavadel Sanatorium, Davos-Platz.
1910	March-June	In love with 'Jenny.'
	April 14-24	J. C. P. at Clavadel.
	July 10	Haemorrhage.
	July-Nov.	Confined to bed.
		Friendships with Wilbraham and Miss Sawyer began.

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| 1911 | April 29 | Returned to England. |
| | Summer | At Montacute. |
| | Oct.-Dec. | With T. F. P. at Chaldon. |
| 1912 | Jan. 10 | Left England for Arosa. |
| | Feb. 29 | Crossed the Furka Pass. |
| | March 1-19 | Ill at Clavadel. |
| | March 19 | Returned to England. |
| | April 8 | Louis Wilkinson married Frances Gregg. |
| | April | 'Apathy' at Montacute. |
| | May-June | Visited Venice with J. C. P., Louis and Frances Wilkinson. |
| | Autumn-Winter | Ill at Montacute. |
| 1913 | Summer | Wrote the 'Ivory' stories at Montacute. |
| 1914 | June 8-15 | Marion Linton at Montacute. |
| | June-July | At Seaton with J. C. P. and his parents. |
| | July 30 | His mother died at Montacute. |
| | Sept. 5 | Left England for East Africa. |
| | Oct. 17 | Joined W. E. P. at Gilgil. |
| 1915 | Feb. | Became farm manager at Gilgil. |
| | Nov. 5 | <i>Wood and Stone</i> published. |
| 1916 | Feb. 21 | <i>Confessions of Two Brothers</i> published. |
| | | <i>The Buffoon</i> published. |
| | Oct. 11 | <i>Rodmoor</i> published. |
| | | <i>Soliloquy of a Hermit</i> published. |
| 1919 | March 1 | Resigned post as farm manager. |
| | June 18 | Sailed from Mombasa for England. |
| | Aug. 2 | Landed at Southampton. |
| | Aug.- | |
| 1920 | March | Writing at 3 Greenhill Terrace, Weymouth. |
| | March | Visited Jersey. |
| | Summer | Temporary master at Sherborne Preparatory School. |
| | Aug. 14 | Sailed with J. C. P. for New York. |
| | | At 439 West Twenty-First Street. |
| | October | African articles in <i>New York Evening Post</i> began. |
| 1921 | March | Ill with influenza. |
| | April | With J. C. P. to Sausalito, California. |
| | | Cured for nearly three years by Dr. Abrams. |
| | | Met Theodore Dreiser. |
| | October | Returned from California and settled with J. C. P. at
148 Waverley Place, New York. |
| | Late Autumn | Met Alyse Gregory. |
| 1922 | | Journalism in New York. |
| | Late Autumn | Moved from Waverley Place to 4 Patchin Place. |
| | | <i>Sapphire</i> published. |
| 1923 | Spring | <i>Ebony and Ivory</i> published. |
| | | <i>Thirteen Worthies</i> published. |
| | Aug. 5 | His father died at Weymouth. |
| 1924 | May-July | Visited the Rocky Mountains. |
| | Aug. | Haemorrhage in train to Norwalk, Connecticut. |

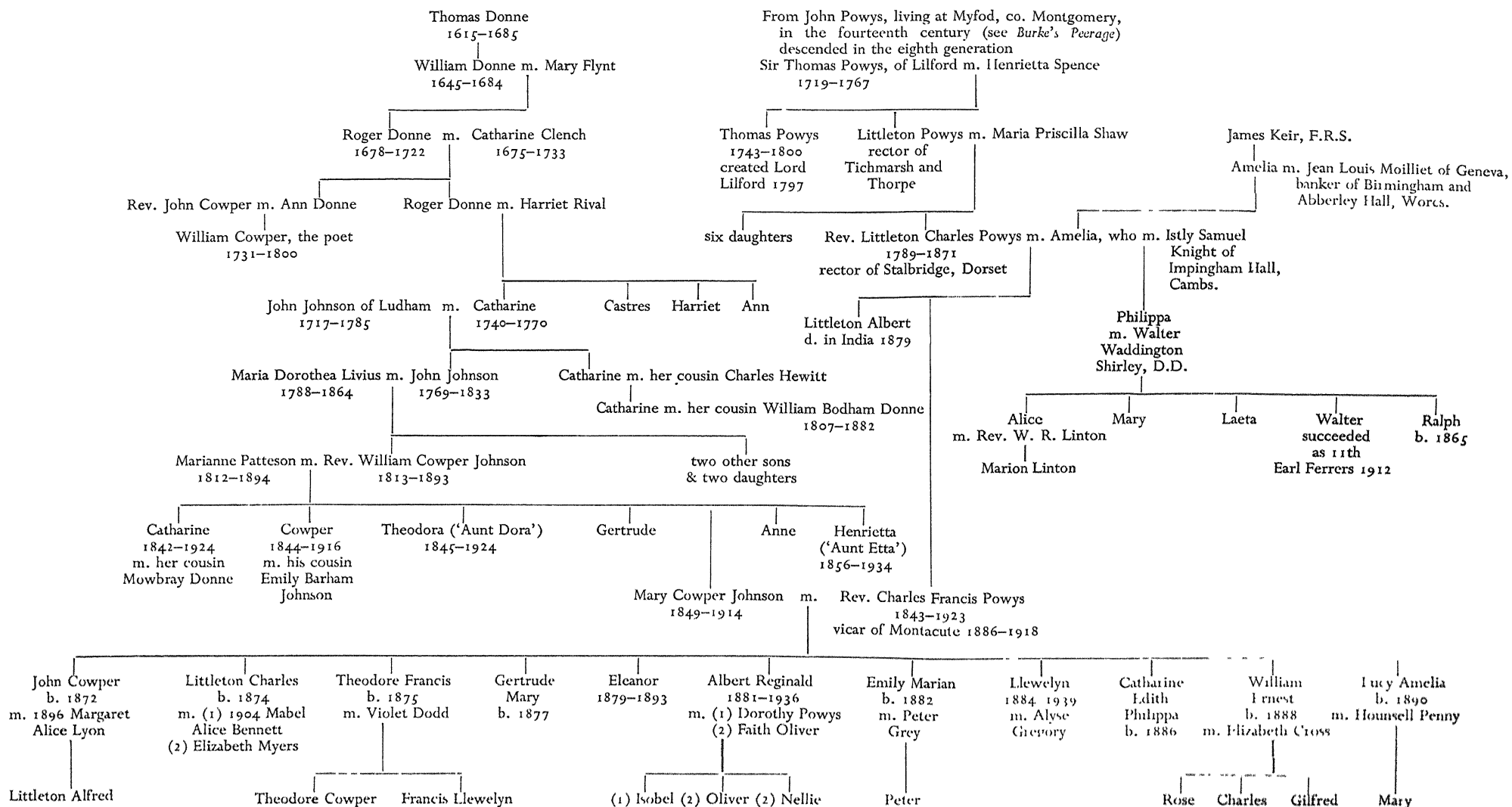
- 1924 Sept. 30 Married Alyse Gregory at Kingston, New York.
Autumn-Winter Wrote *Skin for Skin* at Montoma.
Black Laughter, *Honey and Gall*, and *Cup-Bearers of Wine and Hellebore* published.
- 1925 Jan. 10 *Skin for Skin* finished (published 1925).
Ducdame published.
May 15 Arrived in England from America and settled at the White Nose.
Oct. Visited Rivers Pollock at Earl Soham, Suffolk.
Autumn-Winter Writing *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*.
- 1926 Jan. 17 Left England for Vienna and Paris.
May Began to write *Henry Hudson*.
Oct. 7-Nov. 11 In London, working at British Museum. Met Arnold Bennett.
- 1927 March Finished *Henry Hudson*.
Spring In London, staying with the Mitchisons.
May Death of Walter Franzen at the White Nose.
Nov. 1 Sailed for New York as visiting critic of the *New York Herald-Tribune*.
- 1928 April 18 Returned from New York to England.
July Left England for Holland.
Aug.-Sept. Wrote *Apples Be Ripe* at Belley, France.
Late Sept. Left Venice for Palestine.
Ill at Jerusalem.
Late Nov. Settled for winter at Anacapri, writing *The Cradle of God*.
- 1929 Jan. 20 Moved to Capri.
Feb. Finished *The Cradle of God*.
Early March Ill at Capri.
May 10 Returned to the White Nose.
Summer Writing *The Pathetic Fallacy*.
Autumn In London.
- 1930 Early Spring Finished *A Pagan's Pilgrimage*.
Summer *Impassioned Clay* begun at the White Nose.
Late Aug. Sailed for New York.
Sept. With J. C. P. at Hillsdale.
Oct. In New York.
Nov.—
- 1931 Feb. Writing *Impassioned Clay* at Austerlitz, N.Y.
Feb. Sailed from Brooklyn for West Indies.
Mid-March Returned to Austerlitz.
March 31 Sailed from New York for England.
Nov. Left the White Nose for Chydyok, Chaldon Herring.
- 1932 Jan. Ann Reid died.
Spring Working on *The Life and Times of Anthony à Wood, Now That the Gods are Dead*, and other essays.
July Attack of vomiting. Stomach ulcer diagnosed.
Dec. Visited Oxford for 'Merton Wood's Luncheon.' Met Robert Gibbings.

- 1933 Spring-Summer Writing essays.
 June Visited Dartmoor.
 Aug. 4 Serious haemorrhage resulting from sun-bathing and
 henceforth an invalid.
 Oct. Began *Love and Death*.
 1934 *Glory of Life, Earth Memories, and Swan's Milk* published.
 June-Oct. J. C. P. at East Chaldon.
 July 23 Another serious haemorrhage.
 1935 Jan. 17 Journey to Dorchester for Libel Case.
 March-May Temporary recovery and visit to Weymouth.
 Spring *Damnable Opinions* published.
 July-Sept. Louis Wilkinson at Chaldon, writing *Welsh Ambassadors*.
 Autumn *Dorset Essays* published.
 Nov. 1 *The Powys Brothers*, by Richard Heron Ward, published.
 1936 Jan. Ill with pleurisy.
 March His brother Bertie died.
 Spring and
 Summer Writing *Rats in the Sacristy* and *Somerset Essays*.
 Sept. 13 Another haemorrhage.
 Dec. 2 Left England for Switzerland.
 1937 March *Earth Memories* accepted for American publication.
 Summer Temporary recovery.
 May Visited Kirchner with Louis Wilkinson.
 Autumn Revised *Love and Death*.
 Dec. 2 Serious haemorrhage.
 1938 Jan.-April Too ill to work.
 Summer Writing essays (*Swiss Essays and A Baker's Dozen*).
 June 15 Death of Kirchner.
 Visited by Reginald March, his brother Willie, Louis
 Wilkinson, Rivers Pollock, his sister Marian, and
 Mrs. Watson.
 Nov. Visited by Ethel Mannin. Writing *The Triumph of the Spirit*.
 1939 May 1 *Love and Death* published.
 May Louis Wilkinson's last visit.
 Early Nov. Finished essay on Paracelsus.
 Nov. 19 Stomach haemorrhage.
 Dec. 2 Died in early morning at Clavadel, Davos-Platz.

List of Books by Llewelyn Powys

- Confessions of Two Brothers.* By John Cowper Powys and Llewellyn (*sic*) Powys. Rochester, N.Y., The Manas Press, 1916. Not published in England.
- Ebony and Ivory.* American Library Service, New York, 1923. Preface by Theodore Dreiser. English edition, with preface by Edward Shanks, Grant Richards, London, 1923. Reprinted by Penguin Books, London, 1939.
- Thirteen Worthies.* American Library Service, New York, 1923. Preface by Van Wyck Brooks. English edition, Grant Richards, London, 1924.
- Black Laughter.* Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1924. English edition, Grant Richards, London, 1925. Reprinted in the Travellers' Library, Jonathan Cape, London, 1929.
- Honey and Gall.* Haldeman-Julius Co., Girard, Kansas, 1924. Not published in England.
- Cup-Bearers of Wine and Hellebore.* Haldeman-Julius Co., Girard, Kansas, 1924. Not published in England.
- Skin for Skin.* Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1925. English edition, limited to 900 copies, Jonathan Cape, London, 1926.
- The Verdict of Bridlegoose.* Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1926. English edition, limited to 900 copies, uniform with *Skin for Skin*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1927.
- Henry Hudson.* John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., London, 1927. American edition, Harper & Bros., New York, 1928.
- Out of the Past.* Grey Bow Press, Pasadena, California. Edition limited to 25 copies. Not published in England separately, but included in *Earth Memories*.
- The Cradle of God.* Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1929. English edition, Jonathan Cape, London, 1929.
- The Pathetic Fallacy.* Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1930. Published in America as *An Hour on Christianity*. Reprinted in the Thinker's Library, Watts & Co., London, 1931. Second impression, 1934.
- An Hour on Christianity.* Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1930. Published in England as *The Pathetic Fallacy*.
- Apples Be Ripe.* Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1930. English edition, Longmans, London, 1930. Reprinted in Big Ben Books, Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co., London, 1940.
- A Pagan's Pilgrimage.* Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1931. Published in England from the American sheets by Longmans, London, 1931.
- Impassioned Clay.* Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1931. With a woodcut by Lynd Ward. English edition, Longmans, London, 1931.

Ancestry of Llewelyn Powys



The Life and Times of Anthony à Wood. Wishart & Co., London, 1932. Not published in America.

Now That the Gods Are Dead. Equinox Press, New York, 1932. Limited to 400 copies signed by the Author and Illustrator. Illustrated by Lynd Ward. Not published in England.

Glory of Life. Golden Cockerel Press, London, 1934. Wood engravings by Robert Gibbings. Limited to 277 numbered copies. New edition by John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., London, 1938. In America The Society of Bibliosophers, Cincinnati, Ohio, have announced for publication in 1945 or 1946 an edition of *Glory of Life*, with twelve wood engravings by Lynd Ward.

Earth Memories. John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., London, 1934. With woodcuts by Gertrude Mary Powys.

Damnable Opinions. Watts & Co., London, 1935. Not published in America.

Dorset Essays. John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., London, 1935. With photographs by Wyndham Goodden. Eighteen of the essays afterwards included in the American edition of *Earth Memories*.

The Twelve Months. John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., London, 1936. Woodcuts by Robert Gibbings. Limited edition of 100 copies signed by author and illustrator; also popular edition. Not published in America.

Somerset Essays. John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., London, 1937. With photographs by Wyndham Goodden. Not published in America.

Rats in the Sacristy. Watts & Co., London, 1937. With preface by John Cowper Powys and wood engravings by Gertrude M. Powys. Not Published in America.

The Book of Days. Golden Cockerel Press, London, 1937. Thoughts compiled from the philosophy of Hlewelyn Powys by John Wallis. Illustrated by Elizabeth Corseilis. Limited edition. Not published in America.

Earth Memories. W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1938. With an introduction by Van Wyck Brooks. Contains the 23 essays published in the English edition of *Earth Memories*, together with 18 essays selected from *Dorset Essays*.

Love and Death. John Lane The Bodley Head, London, 1939. With an introduction by Alyse Gregory. Published in America by Simon & Schuster, New York, 1941.

A Baker's Dozen. The Trovillion Press, Herrin, Illinois, 1940. Introduction by Lloyd Emerson Siberell; illustrated by Mathias Noheimer. English edition, with introduction by John Cowper Powys and decorations by Gertrude Mary Powys, John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., London, 1941.

The Letters of Hlewelyn Powys. John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., London, 1943. Selected and edited by Louis Wilkinson, with an introduction by Alyse Gregory. Excludes all those early letters published in *Welsh Ambassadors*, by Louis Marlow, Chapman and Hall, London, 1936.

Swiss Essays. John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., London, in preparation.

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